

CHRISTIAN HOPE IN KOREAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE:
A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF HOPE FOR A MARGINALIZED POPULATION

A Dissertation
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the Faculty of the
Claremont School of Theology

In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Chang Kyoo Lee

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This Dissertation, written by

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under the direction of his Faculty Committee and approved by its members,
has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of
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ABSTRACT

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by

Chang Kyoo Lee

This dissertation seeks to respond to the problems of suffering and hope from a Protestant Christian practical and pastoral theological perspective, highlighting the lived experience of Korean American Christian immigrants and offering suggestions for spiritual care and pastoral counseling with this and similarly marginalized populations. The dissertation is based in part on qualitative research investigating experiences of hope as articulated by six Korean American Christian immigrants. The primary method this dissertation employs is a hermeneutical and phenomenological approach, through which the empirical data is augmented to provide rich descriptions of, and a necessary interpretative perspective on, lived experience of these six research participants. The research constructs an interdisciplinary hermeneutical dialogue between Christian tradition, social sciences, contemporary culture, and lived experience as conveyed in the empirical data. Various psychosocial theories and analysis, such as developmental psychology, cognitive theory, depth psychology, and nursing research, have been utilized in order to examine the phenomenon of hope. To understand the particular meanings of Christian hope, biblical and theological perspectives have been employed, primarily focusing on biblical passages addressing hope and the theologies regarding hope by Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg. From these insights informed by psychosocial and theological interpretations of hope, a practical theology of Christian

hope is constructed, leading to revised suggestions for care that can benefit the care and counseling of a marginalized population.

The main argument of this dissertation includes the following assertions: (1) Christian hope contributes to the promotion of a resilient spirit in our lives; (2) imagination shapes our way of hoping; (3) hope is developed, empowered and, possibly, hampered by relationships we are making; (4) hope is strengthened by our perspectives on the future; (5) Christian hope is based on God's love and grace that leads us into a new future. Implications for the ministry of care and counseling are developed into what I call "Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling" (HOCC). As a phenomenologically-informed, hope-oriented, and theologically-based approach, HOCC uses five strategic methods of care: (1) explore new possibilities; (2) cultivate creative imagination; (3) develop capacity for healthy relationships; (4) increase ability to live in tension between suffering and hope with a resilient spirit; (5) reframe the past. The construction of holistic Christian spirituality is emphasized as a spiritual base.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Why a Practical Theology of Hope?

The Problem

This dissertation responds, primarily from within the context of Protestant Christianity, to the problem of affliction, marginality, and liminality among Korean American Christian immigrants, who have undergone physical, psychological, social, and spiritual difficulties in their lives. It argues that hope rooted in a loving, compassionate, trustworthy, and co-suffering God facilitates Korean Americans' endurance, resilience, and transformation of suffering and adversity. In this work, Korean American immigrant experience is understood as one resource for understanding a practical theology of hope that attends closely to the relationship between Christian hope, human experience of affliction, marginalization, and injustice, and an experience of God as co-sufferer as well as provider of hope. From this perspective, a practical theology of hope is developed that addresses suffering and hope, informed by Korean American Christian immigrant experience.

The idea of hope is an important theme in theology, philosophy, and other disciplines and has been explored in various ways.¹ In the field of pastoral care and

¹ Theological interest in “Christian hope” can be traced to German theologian Jürgen Moltmann, who reclaimed the centrality of hope in Christian theology in his seminal work, *Theology of Hope*. See Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, trans. James W. Leitch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). In philosophy, the works of two philosophers—German Marxist Ernst Bloch and French Existentialist Gabriel Marcel—stand out. See Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986); Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*, trans. Emma Craufurd (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962). More recently, theologians Ellen Ott Marshall and A. Elaine Brown Crawford have articulated the importance of Christian hope from their intellectual contexts, ethical and womanist perspectives, respectively. See Ellen Ott Marshall, *Though the Fig Tree Does Not Blossom: Toward a Responsible Theology of Christian Hope* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006); A. Elaine Brown Crawford, *Hope in the Holler: A Womanist Theology* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002). Other disciplines have interest in hope; for example, in psychology,

counseling, two major scholars have explored the nature, dynamics, and experiences of hope, and its importance for caregiving ministries. Donald Capps, who heavily relies on psychoanalytic literature, emphasizes the significance of maintaining a hopeful attitude in life and the role of a pastor as an “agent of hope.”² Andrew Lester, drawing on existential philosophy and narrative theory, highlights the dimension of the future in which people are free to explore their “future stories” in an open and creative way.³ While Capps’ primary concern is a theoretical conceptualization of hope, giving special attention to the role of the self in the experiences of hoping, Lester has attempted to provide a theological anthropology which emphasizes the significance of future tense, offering clinical theories and methods for assessing “future stories” and for correcting them through deconstruction, reframing, and reconstruction.

One of the missing pieces of their approach is sufficient attention to social and cultural dimensions of hope, and this significant omission weakens their work. As James Poling rightly points out, Lester does not clearly discuss the privileges of the social location he occupies as a white man, thereby lending to his work “an optimism arising from an unacknowledged social location of privilege and power.”⁴ Lester does not clearly discuss how gender, race, ethnicity, class, and other aspects of culture influence

hope is seen as an important element of the therapeutic process. See, for instance, C. R. Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get There from Here* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Carol J. Farran, Kaye A. Herth, and Judith M. Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness: Critical Clinical Constructs* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1995). Hope is also highlighted as a significant theme in the literature of positive psychology. See C. R. Snyder and Shane J. Lopez, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

² Donald Capps, *Agents of Hope: A Pastoral Psychology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

³ Andrew D. Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).

⁴ James N. Poling, review of *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, by Andrew D. Lester, *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 5 (1995): 113.

one's ability to hope. Capps also does not provide culturally and socially nuanced analysis and understanding of hope, limiting his research to suggesting a "general" theory of hopefulness. To begin to fill this void, this project gives considerable attention to the development of a nuanced, contextualized practical and pastoral theology of hope for a marginalized population, based on the voices of Korean American Christian immigrants.

Another weakness of these two pastoral theologians' work on hope is that they did not explicitly articulate the quality of a hopeful attitude and the salugenic aspects of hopefulness: How would a hopeful attitude benefit people in suffering? Drawing on these two great scholars' theories and intervention strategies regarding hope, along with other resources, such as psychology, sociology, history, nursing science, the Scriptures, theology, and philosophy, this dissertation gives particular attention to the effects of a hopeful attitude toward life and to the value and power of hopefulness in people who suffer, providing theologically relevant and clinically effective interventions.

This dissertation responds to the problem of suffering from practical and pastoral theological perspectives, highlighting the importance of lived experiences and providing suggestions for care utilizing an interdisciplinary methodology. Main questions that this project will be focused on include: What makes Korean Americans survive and be resilient in the midst of suffering and adversity, giving them strength and courage to overcome pain and sorrow? What does it mean to hope for Korean American immigrants who are marginalized and afflicted? How can better care be offered to such persons?

As an interdisciplinary enterprise, pastoral and practical theology have endeavored to integrate knowledge and insight generated from the human and social sciences into the wisdom of religious tradition founded in biblical, historical,

philosophical, and systematic theology. In the process of its mutual dialogue between theology and other disciplines, the field of pastoral care and counseling has often been criticized by its overindulgence in the social scientific disciplines, especially psychology, which resulted in the “psychologizing” and/or “psychologization” of the field.⁵ Some scholars have attempted to rectify this tendency, reclaiming the theological underpinnings of the field.⁶ The concept of *hope*, which is the focal theme in this dissertation and is theologically significant,⁷ can be used as an avenue through which a remedy is possible, attempting to engage in a rich and mutually critical dialogue between philosophy, human sciences, and systematic theology.

⁵ See Len Sperry, *Transforming Self and Community: Revisioning Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Direction* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002). In this book, Sperry claims that our awareness of reality is often governed by psychological constructs and explanations, falling into “psychologization of spirituality,” which refers to the therapeutic effect that modern psychology presents for understanding the spiritual life. See also Paul W. Pruyser, *The Minister as Diagnostician: Personal Problems in Pastoral Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976). In this book, Pruyser, a psychologist who served at the highly regarded Menninger Clinic, comments that pastors seem to “like psychological language better than theological language. . . . It is a jarring note when any professional person no longer knows what his basic science is, or finds no use of it” (28).

⁶ See E. B. Holifield, “Pastoral Care Movement,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, gen. ed. Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), especially 848-49; J. R. Burck and R. J. Hunter, “Pastoral Theology, Protestant,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, gen. ed. Rodney J. Hunter (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), especially 870. See also Don S. Browning, *The Moral Context of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976); Don S. Browning, *Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care*, Theology and Pastoral Care Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Charles V. Gerkin, *The Living Human Document: Re-Visioning Pastoral Counseling in a Hermeneutical Mode* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984); Donald Capps, *Biblical Approaches to Pastoral Counseling* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981).

⁷ See Richard Bauckham and Trevor A. Hart, *Hope against Hope: Christian Eschatology at the Turn of the Millennium* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999); Walter Brueggemann, *Hope within History* (Atlanta: J. Knox Press, 1987); Stanley J. Grenz, *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005); Jürgen Moltmann, *Experiences of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); Christiaan Mostert, *God and the Future: Wolfhart Pannenberg's Eschatological Doctrine of God* (London: T&T Clark, 2002); Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969).

The Thesis

In this dissertation, I argue that a hopeful attitude toward life transforms people in the midst of suffering and adversity. More specifically, the thesis of this project is that, as a protective, enduring, and life-affirming quality, hopefulness facilitates Korean American Christians to be resilient, imaginative, relational, and open to the future, when hope is based on a loving, trustworthy, compassionate, and co-suffering God. The hoper has an ability to endure, overcome, and transform suffering and adversity through resilience, imagination, relationality, and spirituality.

Hope, which is deeply related to the future perspective, is not brash optimism, wishful longing, or unrealistic imagination; rather it is based on a reality that leads us into new possibilities for the future and, therefore, the process of hoping is resourceful and novelty producing.⁸ A hopeful vision of a future, however, requires us to have an attitude of humility, patience, creativity, and tentativeness, as “true hope lives in the awareness of the world’s evils, sufferings and lacks.”⁹ I will argue that hope has a paradoxical nature, and therefore a hopeful attitude often develops from our experiences of suffering, affliction, and struggle,¹⁰ and it always involves waiting in openness, patience, modesty,

⁸ See Paul W. Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity," *Pastoral Psychology* 35, no. 2 (Winter 1986): 120-31.

⁹ John Macquarrie, *Christian Hope* (New York: Seabury, 1978), 13. English existential theologian Macquarrie provides a good summary of understandings of “Christian hope.” See chapter 1, “What is Hope,” 1-30.

¹⁰ See the section of Definitions of Terms for a more detailed discussion on the paradoxical nature of hoping.

and humbleness. Furthermore, the nature of hope is not to be a fixed entity but an ever flowing dynamic of our human existence.¹¹

Hope is a protective, enduring, and life-affirming quality in our lives. I argue that hope functions as a protective mechanism when dealing with sorrow, loss, grief, and adversity. Hope as an essential human virtue is also enduring. A hopeful person does not lose her hope amid her suffering, because of its lasting nature. In addition to these two qualities, hope provides sufferers courage and vitality to sustain their life, empowering them in the presence of adversity because of its future-oriented and open-ended attitude. In short, as a protective mechanism, hope helps people endure their suffering and gives energy to live in a lively way.

Hope facilitates people to be resilient, imaginative, relational, and open to the future in the course of their pain and sorrow. Hope and coping are inexplicably intertwined, and the hoper copes with her difficulties in an effective and creative way. People who are hoping are imaginative, reframing their situations and envisioning new possibilities for their future. The hoper develops healthy relationships with others. The hoper also has a future-oriented attitude, seeing reality as an unfolding process, and the hoper is therefore essentially open-minded and flexible with regard to the future.¹²

For Christians, a hopeful attitude toward life is rooted in a God who is trustworthy and loving, a God who voluntarily participates in human suffering and provides strength, grace, and courage to overcome our predicament and adversity. The God of the Bible is a

¹¹ See Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity"; Paul W. Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 3, no. 1 (Autumn 1963): 86-96.

¹² See Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping"; Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity"; Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*; C. R. Snyder, ed., *Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, & Applications* (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000).

truthful God who keeps God's promises with God's people throughout history. The Bible is filled with stories of God's promise and its fulfillment within Israelite history.¹³ In addition, the God of Christianity is not an apathetic, "unmoved mover" (Aristotle) or a Platonic highest Idea; it is rather a co-suffering God who comes to human history, especially revealing himself in Jesus Christ, who is the "visible expression of God's faithfulness to our relationship" that is most vividly manifested by his crucifixion and resurrection.¹⁴ Theologically, thus, a faithful and compassionate God is our ultimate foundation of hope through which we find reason to hope for the future which is not yet realized but possible to attain.

Definitions of Terms

Hope

In this dissertation my working definition of *hope* reflects the dissertation's focus on religious persons and is as follows: *Hope is a human virtue that facilitates the human capacity to transcend a current situation, in the face of its tribulation and adversity, by anticipating a future good, difficult but not impossible to attain.*¹⁵ By *virtue* I mean

¹³ See Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 95-138. See also Macquarrie, *Christian Hope*, 47-55.

¹⁴ See Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). The quote is from Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 65.

¹⁵ I borrowed part of this definition from Thomas Aquinas who discussed the object of hope: "Hope's object is a good that lies in the future and that is difficult but possible to attain." See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 33, trans. William J. Hill (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966), p. 5, quoted in Macquarrie, *Christian Hope*, 9. In this dissertation I am addressing hope as it is experienced by Christians. My focus on the religious nature of hope for some persons should not be taken as an assertion that persons who are not cannot experience hope.

certain human qualities of strength, which help us to maintain courage, dignity, and spirit throughout our life.¹⁶

In this dissertation, I use the term “hope” in distinction to similar terms, such as optimism, positive thinking, utopian expectations, and wish in three important dimensions.¹⁷ First, hope is a reality-based entity which leads us into new possibility for the future. Unlike optimism, utopian expectations, and wishful thinking, which have no relation to the reality, hope is rooted in “the reality of something already given,” which “becomes a driving power and makes fulfillment, not certain, but possible.”¹⁸ It is obtainable possibility: “It is not yet fulfilled and it may remain unfulfilled, but it is already here, in the situation and in ourselves as a power which drives those who hope into the future.”¹⁹ While “foolish hope,” such as optimism, daydream, and wishing, provides no basis in reality, “genuine hope” encourages us to have a hopeful attitude based on the presence of what we hope for.

Second, hope often involves the attitude of waiting, patience, and humility, not of certainty, confidence, and conviction. Hope does not minimize or attenuate the obstacles that people need to realize. Having an undistorted view of reality, the hoper does not miss the ambiguity of the world—evil, suffering, and calamity. The necessity of the

¹⁶ Here I am indebted to psychoanalyst Erik Erikson. Erikson proposed a schedule of virtues to correspond to his eight stages of the life cycle theory. Erikson placed hope among the eight, especially in the first life-cycle stage. I will discuss it in detail in the later chapters, especially in chapter three. See Erik H. Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility: Lectures on the Ethical Implications of Psychoanalytic Insight* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), 113-57.

¹⁷ More detailed discussions of the nature of hope will be presented in the following chapters.

¹⁸ Paul Tillich, “The Right to Hope: A Sermon,” in *Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries*, ed. Mark Kline Taylor (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 327. Theologian Paul Tillich provides a good argument of the nature of hope, differentiating “genuine hope” from “foolish hope.” One of his barometers to assess its genuineness is whether it is based on reality or not. Tillich sees “the seed-like presence of that which is hoped for” as reason for genuine hope.

¹⁹ Tillich, “The Right to Hope,” 327.

moment of waiting, patience, and uncertainty in hope challenges us to be resilient and open toward new opportunities in the future.

Thirdly, in this dissertation, hope refers to a certain type, namely “Christian hope.” Christian hope is a particular form of hope which is based on the Christian perspective that emphasizes the promise and fulfillment of the God of the Bible and its manifestation in the life and work of Jesus Christ. Christian hope is deeply related to faith, the foundation upon which Christian hope rests.²⁰ By faith I mean a belief in God through which the believer is saved from the destiny of eternal death that is the result of sin. While positive thinking and optimism are often based upon an empty language of expectation without a deep ground, Christian hope presents a strong and secure ground, such as the fulfillment of promises, faith in divine guidance, and the truthfulness of the God of hope.

Korean Americans

By the term *Korean Americans*, I refer to a certain ethnic group in the U.S.: Americans of Korean descent, either immigrated to or born in the U.S. According to statistics, the Korean American community is the fifth largest Asian American subgroup, after the Chinese American, Filipino American, Indian American, and Vietnamese American communities.²¹ After China, the U.S. is home to the second largest overseas Korean community in the world. Korean Americans, along with Chinese, Indian, and Japanese Americans, are often called a “model minority,” because they tend to have more positive economic and educational situations as compared to other minority groups.

²⁰ For the relationship between hope and faith, see Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 19-22.

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, “Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000,” http://www2.census.gov/census_2000/datasets/demographic_profile/0_National_Summary/2khus.pdf (accessed August 20, 2010).

However, there is controversy over use of the term. One argument is that this labeling is detrimental to the Asian Pacific American (APA) community as a whole, because the accomplishments of a few are used to justify the exclusion of other APA communities in the distribution of assistance programs, public and private, and to understate or slight the achievements of individuals from other APA communities. Thus, the so-called Model Minority Myth not only aggravates racial discrimination in all areas of public and private life in the U.S., but it also excuses U.S. society from careful scrutiny of issues of race in general and the persistence of racism against Asian Americans in particular.²²

Even though there is no clear demarcation between generations, for the purpose of this study, "first-generation" Korean Americans refers to those Koreans who came to the U.S., usually in their 20s, mainly due to desire for better education, increased freedom, and hope for better economic opportunities. Compared to the 1st generation, "1.5 generation" refers to "those who immigrated at seven years of age or older," while the "second generation" is defined as those born in the U.S. or those born abroad but who immigrated at six years of age or younger.²³

Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology

Practical theology is a distinctive theological discipline that endeavors to bridge theology, theory, and practice. As an academic field of theology, practical theology contributes to the development of scholarly debate, interdisciplinary research methods, and transformative action through careful and critical examination of human problems, societal issues, and lived experience. Practical theology is not a type of applied science,

²² Won Moo Hurh, *The Korean Americans* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998), 123-26.

²³ See Sharon Kim, "Replanting Sacred Spaces: The Emergence of Second-Generation Korean American Churches," in *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*, ed. David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 170-71. See especially the notes on these pages.

but is a reflective theory of practice, a theory of Christian *praxis*. Practical theology often utilizes social scientific methodology and literature for an interdisciplinary endeavor, and it is developed in cooperation with all other theological disciplines. The core of practical theology is its theological nature and the importance and centrality of praxis as the starting point of theological reflection. In this dissertation, the term practical theology is used as an umbrella term that includes not only pastoral theology and caring ministry, but also homiletics, liturgics, religious/Christian education, and church polity and government. *Pastoral theology* is the term that refers to a form of practical theology that gives primary attention to the care of persons, communities, and the world through a multidisciplinary method that interrelates theology, social sciences, and other related disciplines to create caregiving theory and practices. As a theological discipline that has a long history within Christian tradition, pastoral theology is primarily concerned with the theory and practice of pastoral care and counseling. The distinctiveness of a pastoral theological inquiry, compared to other practical disciplines, is its focus on care and caregiving activity with its acute and sincere concern about suffering and the cultivation of relational well-being, with special attention to the complexities of marginalized, voiceless, and invisible experience in the postmodern and multicultural world. Pastoral theology is deeply aware of the importance of cultural analysis, gender sensitivity, and contextual intelligence in order to provide more effective and sensitive care and caregiving ministry.

Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling

Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling (HOCC) is an approach to pastoral care and counseling that I will introduce in this dissertation, based on a practical theological

investigation of hope. HOCC endeavors to respond to human suffering and affliction through the lens of hope. It assumes that hope provides an overarching framework through which individuals, families, and communities can be helped to utilize the power and potential of a future perspective to deal with their problems. Caregivers who use HOCC in their therapy encourage sufferers to participate in the past, present, and future in a constructive way and help sufferers to explore new possibilities, increase creative imagination, develop healthy relationships, and seek holistic spirituality. HOCC is a theologically-based therapeutic approach that presupposes a benevolent and truthful God who calls us into an open-ended and new future and promises deliverance, salvation, and liberation.

Methodology and Methods

In this section, I describe the methodological approach of this dissertation and its corresponding methods. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat provide a helpful distinction between the terms methodology and method. According to Swinton and Mowat, methodology refers to the study of methods that share common philosophical and epistemological assumptions, while methods are particular processes used for data collection and analysis.²⁴ In other words, methodology is the underlying philosophy or theory of the method that provides the rationale for a method, and methods usually follow a particular set of methodological assumptions and guidelines. Thus, the methodology shapes what specific methods are used in the research. It is important to note that Swinton and Mowat claim that hermeneutic phenomenology, one of my main approaches in this dissertation, is both a methodology and a method. They argue that hermeneutics

²⁴ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006), 74-75.

and phenomenology not only offer an ontological and epistemological framework in which research is conducted, but they also present specific methods for the hermeneutic phenomenological research.²⁵

Practical Theology Methodology

This dissertation is a constructive theological endeavor within the framework of practical theology, which highlights the importance of lived experience, interdisciplinary spirit, and the development of enhanced practice, expressed through, in the case of this dissertation, Korean Americans' experiences in their conceptualizations and meaning-making activities of hope. As a practical theological work, this dissertation employs *hermeneutic phenomenology* as its overarching methodology.²⁶ The purpose of hermeneutic phenomenology is to “provide a rich description of the experience and a necessary interpretative perspective on lived experience,” and the researcher has an opportunity to “access into the inner experiences of research subjects.”²⁷ As hermeneutics and phenomenology are primary philosophical frameworks for this study, it seems helpful to discuss crucial elements of these two distinctive approaches. After that, I will describe the methodologies and methods that this dissertation employs.

Phenomenology

In a philosophical sense, phenomenology, which was founded by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and expanded by Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, refers to “descriptive study of how things appear to consciousness, often with the purpose of

²⁵ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 105.

²⁶ I am using the methodology of *hermeneutic phenomenology* as described by Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 101-32.

²⁷ See Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 109, 105.

identifying the essential structures that characterize experience of the world.”²⁸ As the study of the “lifeworld,” which emphasizes immediate, pre-reflective experience, phenomenology attempts to grasp the complexity and inner logic of people’s understanding of themselves and their world.²⁹ One of the primary goals of a phenomenological approach is “to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience the world pre-reflectively, without taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting it.”³⁰ Thus, phenomenologists are not concerned with the *explanation* of the world and its relationship with the humanity; they are rather concerned with a rich *description* that provides “deep insights and understandings,” which “enables people to see the world differently” and act in a different way.³¹ To best understand the phenomenon under examination, it is attempted to set aside all judgments and pre-understandings by the investigator, which Husserl called “epoche” (or bracketing).³²

Phenomenology emphasizes the intentionality of consciousness in that it is believed that “consciousness is an activity guided by human intentions rather than determined by mechanical causation,” which differentiates it from the perspectives of

²⁸ See Martyn Hammersley, “Phenomenology,” in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*, ed. Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman, and Tim Futing Liao (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2004), 3:815.

²⁹ For a good introduction to phenomenological research, see Max Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 8-13, 21-24.

³⁰ Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 9.

³¹ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 107.

³² See Clark E. Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1994), 33. Moustakas discusses Edmund Husserl’s work, especially his *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson, Library of Philosophy (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931).

natural science.³³ Being conscious of something is always intentional, and the act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are intentionally related. Furthermore, the phenomenological perspective highlights an individual's lived experience ("the thing in itself") as the foundation of meaning, and aims to "transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence—in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflective re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful."³⁴

In sum, descriptions of the lived experiences of persons, the investigation of the essential structure of these experiences, the intentionality of consciousness, and bracketing are common philosophical assumptions on which phenomenology rests. Husserl's conception of phenomenology, including his essentialist approach to human experience, has been criticized by poststructuralist and postmodern thinkers who emphasize the fragmentation, instability of meaning, and indeterminacy of human knowledge. I will address these critiques when I articulate my methodological assumptions. The strength of phenomenology is its sincere attempt to understand and describe human experience with the eyes of the people being studied, without providing a hasty evaluation or a casual explanation of why people experience the world the way that they do.

Hermeneutics

Compared to phenomenology, hermeneutics is primarily concerned with the *interpretation* of various types of texts: not only literal texts, such as sacred (biblical) and

³³ Donald E. Polkinghorne, "Phenomenological Research Methods," in *Existential-Phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology: Exploring the Breadth of Human Experience: With a Special Section on Transpersonal Psychology*, ed. Ronald S. Valle and Steen Halling (New York: Plenum Press, 1989), 43. For more detail regarding the notion of the "intentionality of consciousness," see Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*, 28-32; Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 181-82.

³⁴ Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 36.

classical, but also symbolic texts, including human action, behavior, and situation.

Hermeneutics can be defined as the study and practice of understanding and interpretation. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), who is considered a founder of modern hermeneutics and a "father" of practical theology, saw hermeneutics as "the art of understanding" (or the art of avoiding misunderstanding) and argued that the purpose of hermeneutics is to help us to understand the text "better than the author" because the interpreter, as an outsider, is in a better position than the author to grasp and describe its meaning.³⁵ For Schleiermacher, hermeneutics has a double character: *grammatical* explication, which discloses the objective sphere of language, and *psychological* or technical explication, which aims at the subjective act that produces the text, the individuality of the author.

It was Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) who broadened hermeneutics by relating interpretation to all historical objectifications.³⁶ Dilthey endeavored to achieve objectivity in the human sciences through demonstrating methods, approaches, and categories that are applicable in all human sciences. Dilthey believed that all human products, including culture, were seen to be derived from mental life, but he eventually moved from a focus on the mental life of individuals to understanding based on socially produced systems of meaning. Dilthey's primary emphasis was on life or human experience, which provides the concepts and categories of our understanding, and he believed that "lived experience"—first-hand, primordial, unreflective experience—is the

³⁵ See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. Andrew Bowie, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

³⁶ See Norman Blaikie, "Hermeneutics," in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*, ed. Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman, and Tim Futing Liao (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2004), 2:454-56.

most fundamental form of human experience.³⁷ Dilthey has contributed to the development of hermeneutics by shifting its focus “from psychological interpretation to the socially produced systems of meaning, from introspective psychology to sociological reflection, from the reconstruction of mental processes to the interpretation of externalized cultural products.”³⁸ However, both Schleiermacher and Dilthey understood hermeneutics as “general methodological principles of interpretation” and attempted to provide an “objective understanding of history and social life above and outside of human existence.”³⁹

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) turned the aim of hermeneutics to philosophical, especially existential, exploration of the nature of human beings and believed that hermeneutics is required for all understanding. Though influenced by Dilthey, he denied the possibility of objective interpretation because it was not possible for any human being to step outside history or his or her social world. For Heidegger, the central concern was the nature of understanding: “understanding is a mode of being rather than a mode of knowledge, an ONTOLOGICAL problem rather than an EPISTEMOLOGICAL one.”⁴⁰ In other words, Heidegger shifted the focus of hermeneutics from interpretation to existential understanding, which he saw not simply as a way of knowing but as a direct, non-mediated way of understanding and thus, in a sense, a more authentic way of being in the world. According to Heidegger, as an integral part of everyday human existence, understanding is the task of ordinary people, not only of experts.

³⁷ Blaikie, “Hermeneutics,” 2:455. See also Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 180.

³⁸ Blaikie, “Hermeneutics,” 2:455.

³⁹ Blaikie, “Hermeneutics,” 2:455.

⁴⁰ Blaikie, “Hermeneutics,” 2:455. [Emphasis in original.]

Han-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), influenced by Heidegger, maintained the view that supports the ontological nature of interpretation, which emphasizes human beings as interpretative creatures.⁴¹ Humans use complex and ongoing hermeneutical processes in order to make sense of the world. In the process of interpretation, according to Gadamer, it is important to grasp the “historical tradition” in which a text is written so that an interpreter may be able to understand its historical background located in the text.⁴² Gadamer also claimed that the interpreter needs to become aware of his or her own historical situatedness or embeddedness when attempting to understand other cultures and traditions, because this situatedness affect the way in which one does one’s work of interpretation: “the process of understanding the products of other traditions or cultures cannot be detached from the culture in which the interpreter is located.”⁴³ Like Heidegger, Gadamer denied the Diltheyian assumption of objectivity and neutrality in interpretation; instead, he took a position where pre-understandings or “prejudices” are an inevitable and necessary part of our understanding, though he also claimed the importance of openness to new experiences.⁴⁴ Gadamer believed that “a text or historical act must be approached from within the interpreter’s horizon of meaning, and this horizon will be broadened as it is fused with that of the act or text.”⁴⁵ Through what he called a “fusion of horizons,” a process in which the world of the interpreter and the

⁴¹ See Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 110-16. See also Blaikie, “Hermeneutics,” 2:456. For his philosophical work on hermeneutics, see Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall, rev. ed. (New York: Continuum, 1988).

⁴² Blaikie, “Hermeneutics,” 2:456.

⁴³ Blaikie, “Hermeneutics,” 2:456. See also Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 111.

⁴⁴ See Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 111-14.

⁴⁵ Blaikie, “Hermeneutics,” 2:456.

world of the text meet, a hermeneutical conversation occurs within which a constructive and critical dialogue takes place. This process of interpretation works within the framework of “the hermeneutical circle” in which the interpreter moves backwards and forwards from “whole to the part and back to the whole” in order to make sense of the whole situation.⁴⁶

In this work, I take a primarily Gadamerian approach to hermeneutics, influenced by Heidegger. As such, three philosophical assumptions are primary in this work. First, it presupposes the view that interpretation is a basic human activity. Human beings are by definition interpretative creatures and understanding is an integral element of being humans. Through complex and ongoing hermeneutical processes, humans make sense of the world where they live. Second, the hermeneutical paradigm denies the possibility of an objective interpretation of human phenomenon because of the interpreter’s historical situatedness and prejudices embedded in his or her interpretation.⁴⁷ Humans, as interpreting beings, cannot escape from their pre-understandings within which they operate their way of life, belief, and worldview. Third, hermeneutics emphasizes a

⁴⁶ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 115-16.

⁴⁷ It is important to address my own historical and theological situatedness and prejudices that might shape my interpretation of data—in both helpful and problematic ways. I was born and educated in South Korea, spending several years to participate in full-time ministry in a congregational setting, particularly involving a caregiving ministry (“congregational care”). Raised within the Korean Reformed tradition, which emphasizes the importance of the Bible and the evangelical perspective on Christian theology, I was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in Korea in 1999. Arriving at the U.S. for advanced studies in the field of pastoral theology in 2002, I have been educated primarily in mainline liberal theological schools, such as Candler (Emory) and Claremont, but still maintain a biblically-based conservative Christian voice, though the education in the U.S. has enriched my Christian identity and clinical competence in my field. For eight years in the U.S., I have been involved in professional caregiving ministries in the context of hospital, church, and a pastoral counseling center. As a Korean-American practical theologian, part of my interest is to contextualize Korean American experience for academia and the church. My interest in Christian hope originates from my identity as a Christian pastor and pastoral counselor. It is based on my professional experience of being involved in the ministry of care as well as my personal experience of being a person of hope, primarily influenced by family members, especially my mother.

constructive and critical dialogue through the process of a “fusion of horizons” in which a creative conversation takes place. The hermeneutical conversation provides the opportunity to broaden and enrich our understanding through the dialectic of question and answer. The interpreter does not try to engage in dialogue with an unprejudiced open mind, but instead attempts to bridge the gap between the world of the interpreter and the unfamiliar world. In this process, the interpreter’s own “deep-seated assumptions and prejudices” or “horizon of meaning” can be brought to “critical self-consciousness, and genuine understanding can become possible.”⁴⁸

Hermeneutics and Phenomenology

From the discussions presented above, it seems clear that conflicts and tensions exist between these two approaches: hermeneutics and phenomenology. While hermeneutics, as the study of understanding, works with the assumption of the necessity and inevitability of prejudice and bias within which human beings encounter the world, phenomenology endeavors to provide a rich description of lived experience in an objective, unprejudiced way. Significant differences between phenomenology and hermeneutics cannot be denied, but there are also important commonalities. In a sense, these two approaches are complementary.

Swinton identifies three important similarities between hermeneutics and phenomenology.⁴⁹ First, both have a similar purpose in their inquiry, which is an “active, intentional, construction of a social world and its meanings for reflexive human

⁴⁸ Blaikie, “Hermeneutics,” 2:456

⁴⁹ See Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 108-09.

beings.”⁵⁰ Even though phenomenology and hermeneutics are based on different philosophical assumptions, both attempt to understand the world and its meanings in order to be in the world. Phenomenology, though it emphasizes the effort to bracket all prejudgments and biases to describe a phenomenon in an open and fresh approach, does not deny that the process of exploring the meaning of a human phenomenon is the “product of interpretative processes.”⁵¹ Second, both deal primarily with linguistic material. By utilizing and analyzing various texts, written and symbolic, both approaches endeavor to make sense of the world. While the modes of analysis may be different, “the central importance of language and text is shared and crucial.”⁵² Third, Swinton argues that both perspectives attempt to develop “*understanding* which may assist people to anticipate events, by sensitizing them to possibilities.”⁵³ Unlike the natural scientific perspective, which aims to gain explanation, the primary goal of both hermeneutics and phenomenology is to “provide modes of understanding which, while potentially transformative, are not necessarily explanatory.”⁵⁴

Along with these similarities, I would like to identify one more significant common ground between these two approaches. Both hermeneutics and phenomenology identify lived experience as the center of inquiry. Phenomenology sees an individual’s lived experience as the foundation of meaning, especially its immediate and pre-reflective

⁵⁰ J. McLeod, *Qualitative Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (London: Sage, 2001), 57. Quoted in Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 108.

⁵¹ See Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 108. See also Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*, 60-61.

⁵² Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 109.

⁵³ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 109.

⁵⁴ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 109.

experience. Hermeneutics also claims that lived experience is the most fundamental form of human experience. For Dilthey, lived experience is the starting and focal point of human science.⁵⁵ As research methodologies and methods, hermeneutics and phenomenology have developed from a “growing dissatisfaction with a realist philosophy of science based on the study of material entities with no reference to cultural or social context.”⁵⁶ Opposing “both positivism’s treatment of natural science as the only model for rational inquiry *and* all forms of speculative social theorizing,” hermeneutics and phenomenology present a thick and rich description of human experience, along with the necessary process of the interpretive perspective on lived experience.⁵⁷

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

As a method, hermeneutic phenomenology endeavors to provide both descriptive and interpretive dimensions. Van Manen, an educator, summarizes the main characteristics of hermeneutic phenomenology as follows:

Hermeneutic phenomenology tries to be attentive to both terms of its methodology: it is a *descriptive* (phenomenological) methodology because it wants to be attentive to how things appear, it wants to let things speak for themselves; it is an *interpretive* (hermeneutic) methodology because it claims that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena. The implied contraction may be resolved if one acknowledges that the (phenomenological) “facts” of lived experience are always already meaningfully (hermeneutically) experienced. Moreover, the “facts” of lived experience need to be captured in language (the human science text) and this is inevitably an interpretive process.⁵⁸

In relation to this dissertation, hermeneutic phenomenology allows us to explore the lived experience of Korean Americans in a way in which thick and rich description is made by

⁵⁵ See Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 180.

⁵⁶ See Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 109.

⁵⁷ See Hammersley, "Phenomenology," 3:815.

⁵⁸ Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 180-81. [Emphasis and parenthesis in original.]

accessing the inner experiences of research participants. It also provides the opportunity to engage in a hermeneutical dialogue between Christian traditions, contemporary culture, and lived experiences of Korean Americans through the phenomenon of hope.

The Question of Ultimacy

I use materials from Christian tradition, such as the Scriptures and systematic theology, as the foundation of my work and, therefore, it is important to note my position on the question of ultimacy. I write this dissertation with an assumption that there exists some type of *ultimacy* in the world. For me, this is the God of Christianity, who provides the framework to understand hope. As a Christian practical theologian, I claim that Christian faith informs the way Christian people understand hope and its related activities, which will be revealed through the narratives of the research participants. As conversation partners, this work employs various social science resources, such as developmental psychology, depth psychology, nursing sciences, and cognitive theory, as well as the literature of pastoral theology, care, and counseling. However, these resources are engaged in this dissertation with the perspective of Christian belief.

My Theological Location and Method

Theologically, I locate myself within the tradition of Reformed Presbyterianism, especially the Presbyterian Church of Korea, which represents a biblically-oriented, evangelical Christian perspective.⁵⁹ I grew up and was trained within the Presbyterian

⁵⁹ The Reformed tradition usually refers to Presbyterian, but it may also include congregational and occasionally episcopal governance. See John H. Leith, "Presbyterianism, Reformed," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 1987), 11:7388-91. For a thorough understanding of the Reformed tradition, which covers its beginning, ethos, theology, polity, liturgy, its relation to culture, and its prospects, see John H. Leith, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition: A Way of Being the Christian Community*, rev. ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981). For a brief but helpful discussion of a history of the Reformed tradition, especially the Presbyterians, see Lefferts A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians: With a New Chapter by George Laird Hunt*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia:

tradition, became ordained as a Presbyterian minister, and served several Presbyterian churches. Reformed Presbyterianism refers to many different Christian churches following the Calvinist theological tradition. They are organized according to the characteristic Presbyterian polity. John H. Leith, a Presbyterian theologian, has articulated the common emphases, nuances, and patterns of Reformed theology that distinguish it from other theological traditions. According to Leith, the main characteristics of Reformed theology include its theocentric nature (the acknowledgement of the Triune God), the centrality of the Bible in theology, the doctrine of predestination, a radical distinction between the Creator and the creature (the sovereignty of God) balanced by the emphasis on the immanence of God (the incarnation), the emphasis on theology as a practical science (a focus in the everyday life of people and nations), and the interaction of the critical reflection of the mind with the experience of the presence of God in personal life (“theology as wisdom”).⁶⁰ As a Presbyterian, I stand within the Reformed tradition, emphasizing both the sovereignty of God (God’s transcendence) and his immanence (the incarnation), the authority of the Scriptures as the Word of God, the revelation of God recorded in Scripture and particularly embodied in Jesus Christ, and the necessity of grace through faith in Christ.

Presbyterian churches belong to the biggest and most influential Protestant denomination in South Korea, with close to 20,000 churches and 6,000,000 members affiliated with the two largest Presbyterian denominations—Tonghap (unity) and

Westminster Press, 1983); see also James H. Smylie, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians* (Louisville, Ky.: Geneva Press, 1996).

⁶⁰ Leith, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, 96-112.

Hapdong (union)—in the country.⁶¹ In addition, there are many Korean American Presbyterians in the U.S., either with their own church sites or sharing space in pre-existing churches. I belong to the Tonghap denomination, which takes an evangelical view as its primary theological perspective.⁶² Evangelicalism refers to a Protestant movement that highlights: (1) the Bible as authoritative and reliable; (2) eternal salvation as possible only by regeneration (being “born again”), involving personal trust in Christ and in his atoning work; (3) a spiritually transformed life marked by moral conduct and personal devotion, such as Bible reading and prayer; (4) zeal for evangelism and missions.⁶³ As a Korean evangelical Reformed Presbyterian, I embrace a traditional evangelical view, which emphasizes the reliability and authority of Scripture, the importance of the salvific work of God that is manifested in the life of Jesus Christ, and the mission for world evangelization. I espouse the more theologically and culturally conservative wing of evangelicalism as compared to liberals; however, I underscore the necessity of social and political concern for the world as an important issue. My theological perspective differs from fundamentalism, the extreme right wing of evangelicalism, which is characterized by its militant nature (“dispensationalists”), hyper-

⁶¹ See The Presbyterian Church of Korea, <http://www.pck.or.kr/Eng/History/MajorH.asp>; The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, <http://www.gapck.org> (accessed March 15, 2011).

⁶² Though Hapdong tends to be more conservative than Tonghap in terms of its theological perspective and even takes a “fundamentalist” standpoint, both denominations share much in common, embracing evangelicalism as their primary theological stance.

⁶³ George M. Marsden and William L. Svelmoe, “Evangelical and Fundamental Christianity,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 5:2887. These characteristics resonate with Korean evangelicalism. For instance, Korean Presbyterian denominations are active in evangelism and many of its missionaries are being sent overseas, being the second biggest missionary sender in the world after the U.S.

individualistic Christian faith (“personal salvation”), and fundamentalist evangelicalism.⁶⁴

For me, Christian theology is critical reflection on God, human experience, the nature of the world, and faith itself in the light of the revelation of God expressed in the Bible and especially manifested in Jesus Christ. I see Jesus Christ as the final revelation for the Christian community and the decisive revelation of God, which is the criterion of all other revelations. However, every faith ought to be tested by human experience and justified by the facts of experience. In this sense, I claim that as the explication of faith, theological reflection is a human work that is subject to the limitations of human existence. For this reason, there is no perfect theology; no theologian ever exhausts the meaning of Christian faith. Therefore, as espoused by the German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg, no theology is ever *the* theology or the final statement of Christian faith.⁶⁵ I think God’s Word is final, but its interpretations will neither be complete nor wholly accurate.

As a Reformed Presbyterian, I claim that Christian theology is primarily concerned with the revelation of God, along with the actual experience of the Christian community, and, as Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* suggests, it is “a relentless wrestling with the data of theology, especially the Bible and the history of doctrine, in such a way to allow Christian faith to be expressed in the contemporary situation in a way that is true

⁶⁴ For a discussion on fundamentalist Christianity, see Marsden and Svelmoe, "Evangelical and Fundamental Christianity," 2887-93.

⁶⁵ See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991-1998), originally published in German in 1988-1993. For an introduction to Pannenberg’s theology, see Grenz, *Reason for Hope*.

to the data from which it arises.”⁶⁶ Thus, in its essence, Reformed theology is characterized by deep involvement with Scripture and the Christian tradition. However, as Leith rightly maintains, Reformed theology does not disregard the other facets of dialogue, for instance, with culture, the physical and social sciences, and political, social, and economic movements that raise important questions about human life that need to be answered by theologians.⁶⁷ These disciplines actually enrich and expand the perceptions of theologians, helping them encounter what has not been previously seen or heard in the divine revelation. It is important to mention that from its start, Reformed theology has had a practical inclination, as Calvin’s theological work is closely related to practical areas of ministry of the church, such as preaching and pastoral care.⁶⁸ One of the strengths of Reformed theology is that it embraces a theology that focuses on the everyday life of people and communities. Reformed theology also emphasizes the importance of the *critical* engagement with human and Christian experience, in that “Theology without commitment and devotion without intellectual understanding are alike ruled out by Calvin’s insistence on the indissoluble unity of word and Spirit in the study of the Bible and of theology.”⁶⁹ Thus, in the Reformed tradition, theology is understood

⁶⁶ Leith, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, 96. For an edited version of Karl Barth’s *magnum opus*, see Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: A Selection with Introduction by Helmut Gollwitzer*, trans. and ed. G. W. Bromiley (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), originally published in 1961 (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark). For a helpful introduction of Karl Barth’s theology, see Clifford Green, ed., *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*, *The Making of Modern Theology* (San Francisco: Collins, 1989).

⁶⁷ Leith, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, 94-96.

⁶⁸ See John T. McNeill, *A History of the Cure of Souls* (New York: Harper, 1951), 192-217; William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, Master Work Series. (Northvale, N.J.: J. Aronson, 1994), 224-32, originally published in 1964. Leith mentions that Calvin’s major theological work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, had practical purposes. Furthermore, Reformed theology is more inclined to be biblical than philosophical and more practical than speculative. See Leith, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, 103-11.

⁶⁹ Leith, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, 111.

as “neither technical knowledge nor emotion” but as “wisdom” in the sense that theology is the “judgment of the whole self, uniting the critical reflection of the mind with the experience of the presence of God and with the life of obedience.”⁷⁰ For this reason, Reformed theology uses human and Christian experience as important dimensions for theological inquiry, providing greater precision and clarity.

My Reformed Christian theology informs the way I conduct theological reflection on human experience. As a Reformed Presbyterian, I use Scripture and the Christian tradition as my primary sources of knowledge that guide and provide my hermeneutical framework within which I carry out practical theology. Since practical theologians are concerned with the actual experience of the human and Christian community and believe that faith is an embodied and lived act, however, practical theology often involves engagement of academic disciplines beyond theology. As mentioned above, Reformed theology welcomes dialogues with other sources of knowledge, such as the social sciences, in that it allows theologians to broaden and increase their understandings of God and the divine revelation in the world. Through the process of an interdisciplinary conversation, the social sciences can be augmented and tested by the variety of theological points of view. At the same time, as theology is a human enterprise, it also can be challenged, criticized, and influenced by the social sciences. In this way, both disciplines are mutually and critically engaged.

However, as a Reformed practical theologian, I claim that theology establishes norms and criteria (e.g., Scripture and the Christian tradition) for evaluating the social

⁷⁰ Leith, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, 112.

sciences, and that practical theology should be faithful to its theological roots.⁷¹ In this sense, my theological method is similar to the Reformed pastoral theologian Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, who claims the conceptual and logical priority of theology over the social sciences in general, and psychology in particular.⁷² Based on Karl Barth's theology, especially the Chalcedonian pattern of Christ's two natures, Hunsinger argues that "theology is given the place of logical priority. That is, psychological concepts, while retaining their irreducible distinctiveness and autonomy as psychological concepts, are placed properly within a larger overarching context of Christian theology."⁷³ The rationale for this somewhat provocative statement is based on her understanding of both disciplines as having an "asymmetrical ordering" (no conceptual integration and no translation).⁷⁴ My theological method embraces Hunsinger's point, in that I espouse the position that theology takes logical precedence in interdisciplinary inquiries. I favor this method because, as is appropriate from a Reformed point of view, it emphasizes the theological dimensions of practical theological work and prevents the risk of removing the significance of the reality of God from the practical theological endeavor.⁷⁵

⁷¹ As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I am aware of the recent history of practical theology, where practical theology, at times, has lost sight of its theological moorings in its endeavor to have a conversation with other disciplines, especially the social sciences, and pushed its primary theological task into the background. See Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 6-10.

⁷² Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, *Theology and Pastoral Counseling: A New Interdisciplinary Approach* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995).

⁷³ Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, "An Interdisciplinary Map for Christian Counselors: Theology & Psychology in Pastoral Counseling," in *Care for the Soul: Exploring the Intersection of Psychology & Theology*, ed. Mark R. McMinn and Timothy R. Phillips (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 225.

⁷⁴ Hunsinger, "An Interdisciplinary Map for Christian Counselors," 224-31. Hunsinger elaborates the way in which the study of psychology can enrich and deepen our life of faith. See Hunsinger, "An Interdisciplinary Map for Christian Counselors," 231-39.

⁷⁵ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 75-88. Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward provide an introduction to the methods of theological reflection. Their discussions of the method of correction are helpful for understanding its characteristics. See Elaine L.

A Revised Model of Mutual Critical Correlation

As stated above, I am using a “revised model of mutual critical correlation” in which theology takes logical priority over any other dialogue partner.⁷⁶ The mutual critical correlation method aims to correlate issues and concerns of contemporary experience with the normative positions of the Christian tradition in a way that is dialectical and mutually critical. Based on the methods developed by Paul Tillich, Seward Hiltner, David Tracy, and Don Browning, it engages in the critical correlation of the Scriptures, Christian tradition, and other sources of knowledge, particularly social scientific disciplines.⁷⁷ In the heart of the mutual critical correlation method is an *interdisciplinary* spirit, which intends to employ an ample amount of scholarship from various disciplines, attempting a critical and creative dialogue. In a mutually constructive critical conversation, all parties potentially have an equal say, becoming open to radical transformation. The mutual correlation method endeavors to “enlighten, broaden, deepen and if necessary challenging both ecclesial practice and theological understandings in the light of current practice, Christian tradition and the illumination which can be gained from other sources of knowledge.”⁷⁸ In this process, theological understanding is assumed to be emergent and dialectic rather than revealed and applied.

Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM, 2005), 138-69.

⁷⁶ I borrow this term from Swinton and Mowat. See Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 88.

⁷⁷ See Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-1963); Seward Hiltner, *Preface to Pastoral Theology*, The Ayer Lectures, 1954 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958); David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975); Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

⁷⁸ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 82. See also Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods*, 158-61.

However, for me, the problem of the critical correlation method is its “potentially unfettered interpretative dimensions” that can override theology on central issues.⁷⁹ As John Milbank rightly asserts, the social sciences have attempted to supplant the overarching vision of Christian theology, to the extent that liberal theology absorbs secular values without realizing it does so. And importantly, the normative status of Christian theology is not accepted within critical correlation.⁸⁰ James Fowler warns that there is a danger to overly indulge in the use of the hermeneutical method, which the mutual critical correlation method uses, losing practical theology’s central commitment to religious praxis, which may end up with “worshiping before the altar the ‘sovereignty of method.’”⁸¹ Fowler also correctly comments that, in its endeavor to engage in mutual and critical correlation, practical theology needs to keep in mind that it is performed “with the determined intent to keep the use of methods and perspectives from the social sciences under theological control.”⁸² I prefer the revised model of mutual critical correlation, which I think provides the true stance for practical theological work. The revised model also fits my Reformed theological tradition. In sum, while there remains much scope for critical dialogue and mutual reflection, for me, the conversation is always inherently asymmetrical, prioritizing theology.

It needs to be mentioned that, though I espouse a revised model of critical correlation as my theological method, I assert that theology itself can be and indeed

⁷⁹ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 88.

⁸⁰ John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006). Cited in Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods*, 168.

⁸¹ James W. Fowler, "Practical Theology and the Social Sciences," in *Practical Theology: International Perspectives*, ed. Friedrich Schweitzer and Johannes A. van der Ven (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 297.

⁸² Fowler, "Practical Theology and the Social Sciences," 303.

should be the subject of critical reflection and challenge. As mentioned earlier, theology is a human endeavor and subject to the limitations of human existence. Though revelation is real and God does speak meaningfully and uniquely through the witness of Scripture, theology is conditioned by the interpreter's situatedness and embeddedness in her social, theological, and religious context (in my case, the theology of the Reformed tradition and my identity as a Korean American, etc.). As Swinton and Mowat state, "doing theology is an interpretive enterprise within which divine revelation is interpreted by human beings who are fallen, contextually bound and have a variety of different personal and denominational agendas."⁸³ As such, practical theology requires strong self-awareness and reflexivity. Thus, within the critical conversation, I recognize and accept fully that theology comes first; nevertheless, I subject theology to critical reflection and examination.

Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative research method that I have used in the study is based on *hermeneutic phenomenology*, through which the researcher identifies the meaning of human experiences about a phenomenon (in this dissertation, *Christian hope in Korean American experience*) as described by research participants.⁸⁴ To collect rich data for my accountability to a multiplicity of experience, I conducted in-depth interviews with a selected group of Korean American Christians. Using a hermeneutic phenomenological method, I reduced the experiences to a central meaning or the "essence" of the

⁸³ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 89.

⁸⁴ The research design used in this dissertation is an adaptation of the research frameworks developed in the work of Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*; John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2007); Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*.

experience.⁸⁵ In general, a phenomenological process of collecting data involves primarily in-depth interviews with individuals, ranging in number from 5 to 25.⁸⁶

For my research, eligible participants met the following criteria (“*criterion sampling*”): (1) Korean Americans who are immigrants living in the Greater Los Angeles area; (2) those who have Christian beliefs; (3) those who have suffered marginality, discrimination, and other injustice in the U.S. but have managed themselves through a hopeful attitude; (4) those who provide informed consent to participate. Interviewees were recruited from Korean communities, primarily from churches, through public advertisement using the churches' weekly bulletins.⁸⁷ Six interviewees were selected from among the volunteers who wanted to participate in the study.⁸⁸ The interviews were conducted in the Korean language. During the interviewing process, the researcher attempted to set aside all prejudgment, as much as possible, bracketing his experiences and relying on intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience.

The interviews were digitally recorded for audio only, and were then partially transcribed and translated by me, the researcher, thus creating a text which could become the locus of interpretive process. For the purpose of protecting confidentiality, I have

⁸⁵ See John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1998); John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2009).

⁸⁶ Literature shows that with an in-depth interview lasting as long as 2 hours, 10 subjects represent a reasonable size in a phenomenological study. See Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 120-23.

⁸⁷ See Appendix A.

⁸⁸ The total number of willing participants was nine, and they submitted the application form for the interviewing. I selected six interviewees out of nine based on their availability and the convenience of reaching them. I then contacted them by phone and made a schedule for the interviews. There was an even number of males and females, and the ages ranged from the twenties to the sixties.

used pseudonyms when referring to or quoting the interviewees, and have changed some details from their stories to further disguise their identity.⁸⁹ Collected data were analyzed and interpreted using *phenomenological data analysis*, which proceeded through the analysis of specific statements and themes, a search for all possible meanings, and the methodology of reduction, a process through which the researcher endeavors to reduce the experiences to a central meaning or the “essence” of the experience.⁹⁰ In data analysis, I followed the steps of the phenomenological research method advocated by Moustakas, Polkinghorne, and Van Manen.⁹¹ The original data were listed into significant statements, or “horizontalization.” I then attempted to cluster important themes and meanings (“clusters of meanings”), using phenomenological and psychological concepts. After that, I made a general description of the experience, through the “textual description” (what was experienced) and the “structural description” or “imaginative variation” (how the phenomenon was experienced). Through these steps, I arrived at my sense of the essential, invariant structure (or “essence”) of the experience, a description which characterized the phenomenon of all participants in the research.

Researchers using hermeneutic phenomenology seek to provide a rich (phenomenology) and contextual (hermeneutics) description of the experience, endeavoring to find meaning and understanding of lived experience. The idea that there is an “essential, invariant structure” to experience might be challenged by other

⁸⁹ I have used English pseudonyms for the research participants, which are not their real names. Most interviewees immigrated to the U.S. a long time ago, and I assume that they may have an American name, along with a Korean name. Using English pseudonyms seems to be more convenient for the majority of readers as well.

⁹⁰ For a good summary of the phenomenological research method, see Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 59-62.

⁹¹ See Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*; Polkinghorne, “Phenomenological Research Methods,” 41-60; Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*.

thinkers, but main themes and the experiential structures of Christian hope in the lives of research participants emerged through the research. A limitation of the methodology is that it results in a small-scale, localized understanding of a phenomenon which cannot be tested and generalized; further, it does not allow a nuanced understanding of different demographic populations. In addition, the hermeneutic perspective of the researcher influences the researcher's analysis, interpretation, and understanding of the empirical data; the theoretical and theological situatedness of the researcher plays a significant role in coding data at all levels of analysis.

Qualitative Interviewing

Interviewing is one of the primary means to conduct qualitative research and involves generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants.⁹² For this dissertation, I conducted qualitative interviewing with three main purposes: (1) to understand the meaning of hopefulness in Korean American Christian experience; (2) to obtain thick descriptions of the life world of selected Korean Americans Christians with respect to understanding the interrelatedness of suffering (e.g., marginalization, affliction, liminality, etc.) and hope; (3) to enhance the researcher's understanding of hope to better care for Korean American Christians who receive pastoral care and counseling. Even though I had in mind specific goals for interviewing (as mentioned above), interviews were conducted in the spirit of a phenomenological approach, which attempted to elicit rich data that would enable

⁹² For a succinct but helpful summary of qualitative interviewing, see Carol A. B. Warren, "Interviewing in Qualitative Research," in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*, ed. Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman, and Tim Futing Liao (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2004), 521-24. For an extensive discussion of interviews in qualitative research, see Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, eds., *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2002); Steinar Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1996).

research participants freely to relate their personal narratives in ways that are uninhibited, as much as possible, by my personal prejudices, biases, and judgments.

The interviewees were asked to respond to ten semi-structured, semi-clinical, and open-ended questions.⁹³ The interviews lasted from 45 to 90 minutes and took place at a number of locations: local churches, the public library, and in participants' home. Along with these primary interviews, I spent time with the participants through individual contacts to validate the findings of interviewing, making any alterations necessary caused by obvious misunderstanding or misinterpretation. A copy of thematized narratives and their analysis was given to the participants for validation. Through this validating process, the participants became co-researchers, actively participating in the shaping and interpreting of the data. These feedback sessions provided useful information and clarification that proved invaluable to the overall research process. All interview data—tapes, memos, and identifying information—will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

Pedagogical Aspects of This Work

Along with hermeneutic phenomenology as its method, this work has a pedagogical purpose. Through the descriptions, analyses, and interpretations of Christian hope manifested in the lived experience of Korean Americans, it provides general guidelines and principles that caregivers might be able to use for their practices of care. In the final chapter of this dissertation, in the approach I call Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling, I have outlined some methods and procedures that this approach follows. I hope it helps caregivers to enhance their ministry of care in the effort to provide better assistance and guidance for people in need.

⁹³ For the interview protocol, see Appendix B.

Intended Audience

This dissertation is prepared as a partial requirement for a Ph.D. program at Claremont School of Theology. Thus, the primary audience is scholars in academia, especially three core faculty members who are on my dissertation committee. As this inquiry deals with Christian hope in Korean American experience, however, the focused audience also includes Korean immigrants living in the U.S., who have suffered from discrimination, marginality, and injustice because of their cultural, social, and spiritual situations but have not given up continuing to hope. This work also embraces as a primary audience clinicians and other professionals who are providing care in various contexts, such as parishes, congregations, hospitals, etc., including religious professionals, pastors, lay leaders, and caregivers. I hope this research provides these leaders insights and resources to better care for people who receive pastoral care and counseling.

Even though the study focuses on Korean Americans—their struggles and courage to hope—it is not only for them. I hope that it benefits other ethnic groups. In this regard, the psychosocial analysis and theological reflection in this dissertation may be applicable to people who have different cultural, historical, and religious backgrounds, insofar as hope is a universal human phenomenon. I also hope that this work benefits theorists, clinicians, and educators who study the intersection of religion, psychology, and spirituality. In recent years, there is growing interest in religion and spirituality in the social sciences. Even though specific inquiries, concerns, and perspectives might differ, I believe that we can learn from each other and benefit from interdisciplinary work. The theological reflection in this dissertation may provide scholars in other disciplines an

example of the way in which a theologian understands the phenomenon of hope and thus provide a new and fresh perspective to grasp the meaning of hope and suffering.

My academic expertise lies in the fields of practical theology, pastoral theology, pastoral care, and counseling; thus the theology, theory, and practices presented in the study may be most applicable in such places as pastoral counseling and psychotherapy training centers, clinical pastoral education training sites, theological schools, and local congregations. I cordially welcome the general public as my reader, but I write this narrative with an assumption that the reader is situated to have adequate knowledge of this field so as to reflect on the theory explored and to implement the practices suggested.

Scope and Limitations

My focus in this dissertation is to construct a practical theological perspective on hopefulness through which human suffering is interpreted from a Reformed Christian perspective and the power and potential of Christian hope for a marginalized population, such as Korean American immigrants, are sensitively addressed. The description and analysis of suffering and hope are primarily focused on lived experiences of Korean American immigrants, most of whom have evangelical Christian beliefs. Although there may be various ways to explore hope in a religious perspective, a Christian view of hope is the primary focus of this work. My intention is to develop a theoretical understanding of hopeful caregiving; thus I will provide general suggestions and guidelines for doing care and counseling using a hope-oriented approach.

I include qualitative research using in-depth interviews, and the data that come from interviewing lie at the heart of this dissertation. My focus is to use the interview data as much as possible to provide enough support to advance my argument. Using the

empirical data, I examine the importance of hope in human existence and its implications for the pastoral care and counseling situation. The empirical data is limited to the lived experience of six Korean American Christian immigrants in the U.S. and, thus, though I provide a brief history of Korean immigration in the U.S., I do not discuss overall Korean history, except some necessary cases (even in this case, the treatment of Korean history is very short).

Practical theology of hope often involves the issue of dying, hospice, and other concerns in situations of terminal illness,⁹⁴ but this dissertation does not focus on these important issues; rather this dissertation is concerned with hope and its salugenic, life-affirming, and health-promoting dimensions, expressed through people who are marginalized, oppressed, or are living in injustice. The implications for the ministry of care, as mentioned above, are limited to providing overall principles and guidelines; the dissertation does not describe a concrete, detailed “how-to” type of intervention procedures regarding the practice of Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling.

Originality and the Importance of This Work

This dissertation joins with already established literature of hope in pastoral care and counseling and other disciplines. The originality of this inquiry is located in its thorough exploration of Christian hope within Korean American experience, along with its theoretical and pastoral implications. Grounded deeply in Christian theology, this study breaks new ground for a practical theology for Korean immigrants in the U.S.

One of the contributions of this study is the analysis of suffering and hope in the lives of a marginalized ethnic group in America—Korean Americans. The voices of

⁹⁴ See, for instance, Russell Herbert, *Living Hope: A Practical Theology of Hope for the Dying* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2006).

Asians and Asian Americans are not articulated very often in the U.S. academy. This project contributes to an intercultural study of hope through the phenomenological and contextual understanding of hope in the experience of Korean American Christian experience, which is much needed, though few studies have been done. It is important to emphasize intercultural research because “in the absence of such studies there is the potential to adopt a Western view of hope that may be misapplied to persons of other cultures.”⁹⁵

This analysis of human suffering along with its lived experiences and the power and potential of hopefulness for Korean American immigrant Christians will be a significant testimony to the contemporary human condition. Likewise, it will be a tremendous resource for Korean Americans who seek to cope with their struggles and difficulties in a holistic and creative way. In this way, the construction of a practical theology of hope and the development of a hope-oriented approach to pastoral care and counseling contribute to the study of religion in America.

Review of Practical Theological and Pastoral Care and Counseling Literature on Hope

In this section, I review literature in practical theology, pastoral care, and pastoral counseling on the subject of hope, in order to locate my work in relation to other research. The analysis is developed according to the following themes: hope in a practical theological perspective; hope in pastoral care and counseling; and practices in a hopeful perspective.

⁹⁵ Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 191. See also Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2006), which endeavors to provide an intercultural approach to pastoral theology and care.

Hope in a Practical Theological Perspective

The most recent and closely related work to my dissertation is Bo-rah Chung's effort on Christian hope. In her dissertation, "Configuring the Context of Realistic Christian Hope: A Multidisciplinary Inquiry into Practices of Pastoral Care for Marginalized Persons," Chung, a Korean American female practical theologian, argues that marginalization influences an individual's experience of hope over time.⁹⁶ Using a phenomenological social constructivist approach, which employs in-depth interview, Chung endeavors to examine complex and ambiguous human experience through the lenses of a multidisciplinary method of pastoral theology, a sociological life course perspective on inequality, and Edward Farley's theological anthropology. Based on the lived experiences of two Korean American Christians, whom she interviewed, Chung constructs a practical theology of realistic Christian hope for marginalized persons. Through this work, Chung emphasizes the importance of a faithful commitment to living in tragic circumstances and social vulnerability, as well as in the freedom of vitality. She suggests ecclesiastically-based practices of care that highlight life-affirming relationships, participation, and dialogues. The strengths of this writing include the breadth of the analysis of marginality, care in the context of an ecclesial perspective, and a thorough interdisciplinary endeavor. My research is similar to Chung's because it is based on a phenomenological research method, using in-depth interviewing, and focuses on specific Korean American Christian experience. However, I use different resources; compared to Chung, who employs theological anthropology and life course sociology, I utilize biblical

⁹⁶ Bo-rah Chung, "Configuring the Context of Realistic Christian Hope: A Multidisciplinary Inquiry into Practices of Pastoral Care for Marginalized Persons" (PhD diss., Emory University, 2009). In ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink?Ver=1&Exp=01-23-2016&FMT=7&DID=1826087481&RQT=309&attempt=1> (accessed May 28, 2010).

theology and systematic theology as the center for my argument, along with psychosocial literature, such as developmental psychology, cognitive theory, etc. and attempt to develop a practical theology oriented to a hopeful perspective.

Another important work that is very informative to my research is that of Russell Herbert. A British practical theologian, Herbert presents a practical theological understanding of hope contextualized in the experience of death and dying.⁹⁷ Drawing upon nursing literature and Jürgen Moltmann's theology of hope, Herbert suggests that absolute hope based on faith in the Resurrection would provide enough rationale and assurance to overcome the human predicament. Herbert understands hope as a basic and essential human reality, which is closely related to coping and influences physical health. According to Herbert, the sources of hope include relationships, goal and activity, imagination, and humor and laughter; however, Christian faith is itself the very base of hope. My research builds on Herbert in one significant way: I, too, argue for Christian hope that contributes to the well-being of people who are suffering. However, my work is quite distinct from Herbert's in that I focus on hope for a marginalized population, not on death and dying.

Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling

A formative work on Christian hope in the field of pastoral care was published by pastoral theologian Robert L. Carrigan more than three decades ago. In his article, "Where Has Hope Gone? Toward an Understanding of Hope in Pastoral Care," Carrigan questions the lack of a conceptual model of hope for pastoral theology and develops a

⁹⁷ Russell Herbert, *Living Hope: A Practical Theology of Hope for the Dying* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2006).

theology of hope for pastoral theologians and counselors.⁹⁸ Carrigan sees the basis of Christian hope in the “promise of the presence of God” and “trust in God’s love.”⁹⁹ The author claims that hope is nonabstract, relational, imaginative, intuitive, integrative, and holistic rather than logical, analytic, or sequential. He also asserts that Christian hope is not individualistic, but relational, and is “living by grace.”¹⁰⁰ Differentiating Christian hope from wishful thinking or shallow optimism, Carrigan suggests six implications of hope for pastoral care, including its contagious quality, its use for creative imagination, its realistic expectation, and its nonrational nature. My work is related to Carrigan’s in that I agree with Carrigan’s assertion that hope is relational, imaginative, holistic, and grounded in Christian faith. Building on Carrigan’s work, I endeavor to provide a contextualized theory and practice of Christian hope.

In the field of pastoral theology, Capps’ and Lester’s work on hope, which was discussed briefly in the beginning of this chapter, provides significant contributions to the understanding and practice of a hopeful ministry.¹⁰¹ Depicting hope as the fundamental aspect of human experience, Capps reminds pastors of their role as “agents of hope” and emphasizes that promoting this hope is their distinctive Christian calling. Giving particular attention to the role of self in the experience of hope, Capps develops a psychology of hope that explores from where hope originates and in what ways people experience hoping. Capps suggests that there are three “allies” of hope—trust, patience, and modesty—and three “threats” to hope—despair, apathy, and shame—in the process

⁹⁸ Robert L. Carrigan, "Where Has Hope Gone? Toward an Understanding of Hope in Pastoral Care," *Pastoral Psychology* 25, no. 1 (Fall, 1976): 39-53.

⁹⁹ Carrigan, "Where Has Hope Gone?" 42.

¹⁰⁰ Carrigan, "Where Has Hope Gone?" 48.

¹⁰¹ Capps, *Agents of Hope*; Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*.

of maintaining a hopeful self.¹⁰² For the implications for the ministry of pastoral care and counseling, the author suggests a method of reframing, particularly the method of envisioning the future and of revising the past. Capps' work is very informative for my research in that he provides a thorough theoretical conceptualization of hope and helpful therapeutic intervention strategies. I utilize his method of reframing as one important way to help a marginalized people to generate hope, and his analysis of a hopeful self—including its origins and developments—helps me to understand the foundation of a hopeful attitude toward life.

Lester calls pastoral theologians to consider the future dimension, a much-neglected but vital element in the ministry of care. Using theological anthropology (an understanding of the human condition from theological points of view), narrative theory, and existentialist philosophy, Lester develops a pastoral theology of hope in which a future perspective plays an important role. Lester's clinical and pastoral suggestions for care and counseling include discovering and assessing future stories through which people can understand their situation better and deconstruct and/or reconstruct these future stories, which also influence the current situation. My work, like Lester's, takes seriously the need to explore the future perspective, but my focus is on how this perspective, in relation to hope, influences the lives of immigrants, the marginalized, and the oppressed.

Stanley Grenz—trained not as a pastoral theologian but as a systematic theologian—develops a nuanced pastoral theology based on his analysis of the current—

¹⁰² Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 98-162.

“pessimistic”—situation.¹⁰³ Grenz believes that we are living in a time of pessimism because of a pessimistic cultural atmosphere around us and the collapse of the optimism and progressivism in recent Western history. Against “anthropologically-based understandings of hope,” which derive from an existential-narrative perspective and are espoused by Capps and Lester, the author constructs a theology of hope for the ministry of care, strongly based on Christian theology. Grenz’s claim is that Christian pastoral theology needs to embrace a hope that is “particular,” “eschatological,” and “pessimistic,” in contrast to the foundationalist hope with its focus on the hopeful human person. For Grenz, hope needs to be directed beyond the human toward the God of the Bible who promises to bring life from death. Grenz’s work helps me to understand the essence of Christian hope—its particularity, the eschatological nature, and the “impossible possibility” (pessimism). My work follows Grenz in that I also believe that Christian hope is manifested through eschatology, the Bible, and particularity, but I claim that lived human experience needs to be incorporated into the construction of theology of hope.

Pastoral theologian Duane R. Bidwell and medical professional Donald L. Batsky present a unique understanding of hope, informed by the voices of children experiencing chronic illness.¹⁰⁴ Based on interview data from research with children suffering from end-stage renal disease, these authors describe the characteristics of hope manifested among these children, which include that hope is “participatory, relational, kinesthetic,

¹⁰³ Stanley J. Grenz, “The Hopeful Pessimist: Christian Pastoral Theology in a Pessimistic Context,” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 54, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 297-311.

¹⁰⁴ Duane R. Bidwell and Donald L. Batsky, “Abundance in Finitude: An Exploratory Study of Children's Accounts of Hope in Chronic Illness,” *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 19, no. 1 (Summer 2009): 38-59.

perceptual, and . . . conative.”¹⁰⁵ They identify five “pathways to hope” in the accounts of their interviewees: real/izing connections, attending to God, maintaining identity, claiming power, and learning wisdom. The strength of this work, and its valuable contribution to the field of pastoral care, is the focused attention given to the care of children, especially those suffering from chronic illness, an often-neglected population within the ministry of care. My work is different from Bidwell’s and Batisky’s in that my primary focus is on hope in adulthood among a marginalized population.

Practices in a Hopeful Perspective

A number of theorists and practitioners in the field of pastoral theology have examined specific methods by which caregivers may cultivate hope as they offer care. Howard J. Clinebell Jr. develops a method that provides an effective way to create and sustain hope through what he calls “growth counseling.”¹⁰⁶ Clinebell suggests caregivers to see an individual’s positive potentials rather than their weaknesses and shortcomings in order to enhance their growth and wholeness. Against pathology-oriented methods, which examine a person’s problems, failures, and conflicts, the author provides an alternative way to offer caregiving that helps people to see their past successes, present strengths, and future possibilities. As a holistic model, Clinebell’s growth counseling seeks to empower growth toward wholeness in all of seven interdependent aspects of a person’s life.¹⁰⁷ Like Clinebell, I seek to articulate the importance of a hopeful perspective for the ministry of care and counseling. My work differs from Clinebell’s in

¹⁰⁵ Bidwell and Batisky, “Abundance in Finitude,” 43.

¹⁰⁶ Howard J. Clinebell Jr., *Growth Counseling: Hope-Centered Methods of Actualizing Wholeness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979).

¹⁰⁷ I will explicate this point more fully in later chapters.

that I am primarily concerned about the context of marginalized people and the construction of a therapeutic approach contextualized through the experiences of these people.

Pastoral theologian and counselor Howard Stone develops a model that provides theories and intervention strategies to deal with depression. Stone links depression with hope because he believes a hopeful perspective facilitates people who are experiencing depression to “engender a hope that recognizes the past but also takes actions in the present in order to move into [the] future.”¹⁰⁸ Along with physiological, behavioral, cognitive, and interpersonal interventions, Stone claims that the framework of hope—such as reframing, recognition of exceptions, establishing goals, using future-oriented conversation, and recognizing strength—can help people suffering from depression to recover from this challenging clinical phenomenon. Though Stone’s work primarily focuses on depression, his work shows how caregivers can use a hopeful perspective in their caregiving ministry. I utilize Stone’s work in chapter six, where I develop a hope-oriented approach to pastoral care and counseling.

Stone and Lester, based on their books on hope, develop methods for envisioning a new future.¹⁰⁹ Claiming that engendering hope is pivotal in all pastoral conversation, these authors offer specific care and counseling methods that nourish hope in troubled people, which include “reframing hope,” “storytelling,” “tracking and expanding future stories,” “envisioning the future without the problem,” “establishing future goals,” “imagining a miracle,” “guided imagery,” and ““as if” conversation.” They locate the

¹⁰⁸ Howard W. Stone, *Depression and Hope: New Insights for Pastoral Counseling* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 62.

¹⁰⁹ Howard Stone and Andrew Lester, “Hope and Possibility: Envisioning the Future in Pastoral Conversation,” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 55, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 259-69.

methods of intervention in the theological assertion that God calls us into the open-ended future. My work recognizes the need for pastoral caregivers to employ hope as an important metaphor for caregiving practices, and therapeutic methods proposed by Stone and Lester are incorporated into Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation aims to construct a practical theology of hope contextualized in the experience of Korean American Christian immigrants. It is developed in six chapters, the first being this introductory rationale for a practical theology of hope.

Chapter 2, “Thick Description: Stories of Suffering and Hope in Korean American Experience,” offers narratives from and analysis of interviews with six Korean American Christian immigrants in the U.S. focused on their struggles and courage to be hopeful. It shows that hope is influenced by the contexts of the hoper, such as the historical, cultural, political, social, and spiritual situations within which a person lives. The unique dimensions of hopefulness will be explored through excerpts from interviews conveying the lived experiences of immigrant Korean American Christians. The interrelatedness of suffering and hope is explained and analyzed through the analysis of these Korean Americans' experience.

Chapter 3, “Psychosocial Understanding of Hope: The Hopeful Self,” articulates views of the etiology, development, and nature of hope. Utilizing theory from developmental psychology (Erikson), pastoral theology of hope (Pruyser, Capps, and Lester), cultural understanding of hope (Averill et al.), nursing (Farran et al.), and cognitive theory (Snyder),¹¹⁰ I argue that hope is not a wishful thought, fancy imagination,

¹¹⁰ See Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 2nd rev. and enl. ed. (New York: Norton, 1963); Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity."; Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping."; Paul W.

or naïve optimism; it is rather a reality-based entity that leads people into a new possibility for the future. Furthermore, I show that hopefulness is not something fixed but an ever flowing dynamic of our human existence. It will be clear from this chapter that a hopeful attitude develops, ironically, from our experience of suffering, hurt, and calamity, all of which are deeply related to our sociocultural environment. Because of its paradoxical nature, hopefulness often requires us to be involved in waiting, patience, perseverance, modesty, and humility.

In Chapter 4, “Christian Theology and Hope: A Theological Reflection on Hope,” I develop an argument from biblical, historical, systematic, and philosophical theology. Utilizing the Scriptures and the scholarship of contemporary biblical theologians, particularly Walter Brueggeman, I locate the story of suffering and hope in the context of biblical narratives. I also trace the tradition of the school of theology of hope in the 20th century, which is represented by Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, among others. I articulate the theological importance of a future perspective, which is manifested in the teachings of Jesus Christ—the imminent Kingdom of God and the Resurrection—which is the center of Reformed Christian theology. Through the theological investigation, it will be argued that Christian hope is based on the eschatological vision of our future, and that our ultimate foundation of hope is not only rooted in the character of the loving and trustworthy God, but also it is based on God’s compassion and voluntary participation in human suffering. The interviews with Korean American Christians support this conclusion.

Pruyser, *The Play of the Imagination: Toward a Psychoanalysis of Culture* (New York: International Universities Press, 1983); Capps, *Agents of Hope*; Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*; James R. Averill, G. Catlin, and K. K. Chon, *Rules of Hope, Recent Research in Psychology* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990); Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*; Snyder, ed., *Handbook of Hope*.

This dissertation is interdisciplinary in nature. Thus, in Chapter 5, “Toward A Practical Theology of Hope: Hopeful Living,” the heart of the dissertation, I construct a practical theological perspective on hope, integrating the findings of my qualitative methodology research and insights and knowledge gained from the social scientific and theological literature explored in previous chapters. I argue that Christian hope facilitates Korean Americans to be resilient, imaginative, relational, and open to the future, even through their suffering. In addition, I emphasize a theological grounding of hopefulness for Korean immigrants in America.

Chapter 6, “Care for the Soul: Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling,” focuses on the development of a hope-oriented approach to care and counseling. Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling is a therapeutic approach that endeavors to respond to human suffering and predicament in a creative way. It employs the power and potential of a future perspective, without ignoring the role of past experiences and the importance of the very moment of the present. Through Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling (HOCC), sufferers are encouraged to participate in their past, present, and future, in a constructive way, exploring new possibilities, increasing creative imagination, developing healthy relationships, and seeking holistic spirituality. HOCC is based on a trustworthy God who calls us into an open-ended future and promises deliverance, liberation, and salvation.

Chapter 2

Thick Description: Stories of Suffering and Hope in Korean American Experience

Hope is, for me, when you feel there is no way out, you hear a whisper that says you will be fine, that there is a way out, a whisper that somebody speaks softly beside you. It is a whisper from outside, from God.

When I think that there is no way out, blocked by a huge wall in my life, paradoxically hope often comes out of that situation. In a situation where nobody can help me, I seek God more earnestly. When there is nothing to rely on, though sometimes you may be stricken with despair, you attempt to grasp the rope of hope more eagerly.

—Chris, a research participant

The purpose of this chapter is to *describe* the experiences of six Korean American Christians in their struggle and excitement living in the “new world”—the U.S.—as immigrants. My primary focus is to depict how the six Korean American Christians I interviewed perceive *hope* in their daily life, maintaining hopefulness within their framework of thought, religion/spirituality, and overall approach to living. To access Korean American experience directly, I conducted hermeneutic phenomenological research, the method of which was explained in the previous chapter.¹ Using in-depth interviews, I collected data which would show the ways these Korean Americans understand hope and how they live with it. In the process of collecting data, following principles of the phenomenological method, I tried, as much possible, to bracket my prejudgments and pre-understandings and to be fully open to the lived experiences of my interviewees.² After collecting the data, I attempted to describe and analyze it, using a

¹ See Chapter 1, 12-36.

² To bracket my pre-understandings, I attempted to be fully present in the interviewing process without presenting my thoughts or opinions regarding the responses of interviewees. When one of the research participants asked me what my understanding of hope was, I responded that the main purpose of

hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. It needs to be mentioned that I employed Husserl's epoche during the interviews but not during the interpretation of data. My theological assumptions and the theoretical and hermeneutic perspectives influenced the way I understand, analyze, and interpret empirical data. In other words, I did have a working hypothesis that I brought to the interpretation of data, and it was confirmed but also expanded and made more nuanced by the data.

This chapter consists of the following inquiries: (1) The Importance of Thick Description; (2) The Place of Experience in Practical Theology; (3) Lived Experiences of Korean American Christians; (4) Korean American Ways to Understand Hope: Hope in its Sociocultural Context. The main argument of this chapter is fourfold. First, the Korean Americans I interviewed see hope as the essential ingredient of living in the world, without which there is a sense of meaninglessness and despair. Second, their hope is influenced by their sociocultural environments, such as the historical, cultural, political, and spiritual situations in which these persons live. Third, the way in which this cohort of Korean Americans operationalize hope is based on their strong Christian belief. Fourth, in these Korean Americans Christians, hope and suffering are deeply intertwined, providing depth and color.

The Importance of Thick Description

As a practical theological inquiry, this dissertation endeavors to grasp a "thick description" rather than "thin" descriptions, which tend to reduce human phenomena to physical and observable experience. The term *thick description*, which was coined by the

interviewing was not to share my opinions, but to listen to the stories of research participants. As an interviewer, of course, I sometimes asked follow-up questions such as, "Can you tell me more about . . . ?" to clarify and enrich what the interviewees said, but I was still careful not to infuse my thoughts into those of the interviewees and to avoid influencing their responses.

philosopher Gilbert Ryle and popularized by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, has had a strong impact on social scientific research, which emphasizes the fact that actions are defined by cultural meanings, not by their physical characteristics.³ In other words, the meanings in a phenomenon depend on context—on who is involved in doing what, when, how, why, in response to what other actions or events, with what consequences, and so on. Thus, following Geertz's direction, it is believed that sound description must include the web of meanings that is implicated in the phenomenon being described.

Even though the term *thick description* was developed and mainly employed by social scientists and qualitative researchers, many practical theologians, who appreciate interdisciplinary work, find it helpful for their theological inquiry. Thick description helps to capture the complexity of certain events and provides rich and nuanced data regarding specific phenomenon, which can be used for practical theological inquiry. In this chapter, I endeavor to produce thick descriptions of a certain human phenomenon—Korean American experience regarding hope, voiced by the six Christian Korean Americans I interviewed. These thick descriptions will be a starting point in our exploration of the meanings of Christian hope.

The Place of Experience in Practical Theology

In this dissertation, the focus of thick description is on specific human experience. Since Schleiermacher, human experience has become an important subject of theological inquiry. By placing religion in the realm of feeling or immediate self-consciousness, Schleiermacher has provided the rationale to use human experience and consciousness as

³ See Martyn Hammersley, "Thick Description," in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*, ed. Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman, and Tim Futing Liao (Thousand Oak, Calif.: Sage, 2004), 3:1124. See also Gilbert Ryle, "Thinking and Reflection," in Gilbert Ryle, *Collected Papers*, vol. 2 (London: Hutchinson, 1971); Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

a vital source of a theological endeavor. It is important to note, however, that for Schleiermacher, religious feeling is not fleeting emotions prompted by one experience or another. It is rather the mode of religious apprehension or self-consciousness. According to Schleiermacher, God is the origin of immediate self-consciousness or feeling. In the feeling of utter dependence, God is actually experienced in the only possible way, and to be conscious of being absolutely dependent is to be conscious of being in relationship with God.⁴

In practical theology, human experience becomes the starting point for theological reflection, offering a “necessary contextual voice to the process of theology and theological development.”⁵ Practical theology, different from the other theological disciplines, has an assumption that as a “performative and embodied act,” faith is “not simply to be believed, but also something to be lived.”⁶ Thus, human experience becomes a place in which “the gospel is grounded, embodied, interpreted and lived out.”⁷ The discipline of practical theology is concerned with the redemptive actions of God-in-the-world and the human experience that emerges in response to those actions. As Swinton and Mowat emphasize, “it is in taking seriously those responses that Practical Theology finds its vital initial reflective position and carves out an important position within the wider theological enterprise.”⁸ Although practical theology takes experience

⁴ See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. Richard Crouter, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999).

⁵ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 6.

⁶ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 5.

⁷ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 5.

⁸ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 11.

seriously and emphasizes its crucial role in theological reflection, as Swinton and Mowat rightly point out, its primary goal and telos transcends the boundaries of human experience and expectation. “The goal and end-point of Practical Theology is to ensure, encourage and enable faithful participation in the continuing gospel narrative.”⁹

Staying close to experience, practical theology engages in hermeneutical conversation with other disciplines, especially with the social sciences. In exploring the situation of certain experience, qualitative methods can effectively be utilized in that they help to uncover the unexplored meanings within the situation and the practices that participants embark upon in response to their particular understandings of the world. The social scientific analysis of a certain situation is then brought to theological investigation, through which particular situations can be understood and reflected on critically in the light of scripture and tradition with a view to enabling faithful practice. This hermeneutical task aims for more than simply to apply theory to the practices through the development of effective techniques. Rather, it uses careful social and theological exegesis of particular situations within which the practices and experiences that emerge from these situations are explored, understood, evaluated, critiqued, and reconsidered. Through these processes, practical theology develops revised forms of practice that will have an impact upon and transform the original situation.

Lived Experiences of Korean American Christians

As has already been observed in the previous chapter, lived experience—immediate, pre-reflective experience—is an important area of inquiry in practical theology. Lived experience is the most fundamental form of human experience. This section focuses on the descriptions of the lived experience of Korean American

⁹ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 9-10.

Christians as manifested in the stories of six interviewees. Before illustrating the core narratives, however, it may be helpful to review the history of Korean immigration in the U.S. in order to better understand particular accounts the research participants deliver.

A Brief History of Korean American Immigration

Since other scholars have provided detailed information on Korean American immigration, I will only offer a minimal description, focusing on some aspects of religious life among Korean Americans.¹⁰ The U.S. Census for 2000 reveals that the Korean American population has reached about 1.1 million, the fifth largest Asian American subgroup, after the Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, and Vietnamese Americans.¹¹ Except for China, the U.S. is home to the largest Korean diaspora community in the world, and Korean Americans have lived in the U.S. for more than a century. In the history of Korean Americans, religion, especially Christianity, has been a vital force to shape their life styles, social services, and racial-ethnic identity, providing an overarching framework that helps preserve their ideas, beliefs, cultural traditions, spiritual practices, and institutions. It has been reported that there are more than 3,000 Korean Protestant ethnic churches the U.S., along with 154 Catholic parishes and 89

¹⁰ For a detailed treatment of the history of Korean American immigration, see Hurh, *The Korean Americans*; Bong Youn Choy, *Koreans in America* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979); Ilpyong J. Kim, ed., *Korean-Americans: Past, Present, and Future* (Elizabeth, N.J.: Hollym International Corp., 2004). On various aspects of religious life in Korean Americans, see Pyong Gap Min and Jung Ha Kim, eds., *Religions in Asian America: Building Faith Communities* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002); David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung, eds., *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*, The Asian American Experience (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Ho Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner, eds., *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

¹¹ See U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, "Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000," http://www2.census.gov/census_2000/datasets/demographic_profile/_National_Summary/2khus.pdf (accessed August 20, 2010).

Buddhist temples.¹² It is known that almost 80 percent of Korean Americans are affiliated with Protestant Christian churches, 11 percent are Roman Catholics, 5 percent are Buddhists, and 4 percent are other or no religion.¹³ Thus, Korean American history is deeply influenced by the shape and diversity of religious experience, particularly by Protestant ethnic churches.

David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung summarize the history of Korean Americans as three waves of immigration and settlement: (1) 1903-1945: labor, picture brides, and independence; (2) 1945-1965: the postwar period; (3) 1965-present: the post-1965 period.¹⁴ The first wave of Korean immigration began in 1903 mainly as a labor force for sugar plantations in the Hawaiian Islands. From 1903 to 1905, more than 7,000 Korean immigrants came to Hawaii seeking work, without intending to stay permanently.¹⁵ Ninety percent of the early immigrants were young bachelors between the ages of twenty and thirty, who were largely uneducated and engaged in semiskilled or unskilled jobs in Korea. They planned to go back to Korea after they made enough money and the political situation of their homeland had changed.¹⁶ The background factor for the first large wave of Korean immigrants was “political and economic calamities derived from

¹² David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung, "Introduction," in *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*, ed. David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung, The Asian American Experience (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 2.

¹³ Yoo and Chung, "Introduction," 2. See also Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 24, 106-08.

¹⁴ Yoo and Chung, "Introduction," 2-5. See also Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 31-47.

¹⁵ Choy, *Koreans in America*, 75-76.

¹⁶ According to Bong-young Choy, a noted scholar in Korean American history, “From 1905 to 1910, the Korean population in the Hawaiian Islands declined steadily. Nearly one thousand returned to Korea, forty died, and more than one thousand went to the mainland, mostly to California.” Choy, *Koreans in America*, 77.

foreign encroachment” by Japan.¹⁷ It was also the influence of the American Protestant missionaries in Korea who encouraged Koreans to emigrate to the Hawaiian Islands for the better economic opportunities and life.¹⁸ It is well documented that about 40 percent of the early Korean community in Hawaii belonged to Christian churches, with at least one church in every Korean community.¹⁹ Since then, as Hurh has observed, “The Korean ethnic church served the immigrant community as a social and cultural center as well as a religious center.”²⁰ In Hawaii, because of the extremely unbalanced sex ratio between males and females (10:1), the idea of “picture brides” was introduced and Korean women were brought from their home towns to marry bachelors in Hawaii through the exchange of pictures, through which 1,100 women came to the U.S. between 1910 and 1924.²¹ On the other hand, many Korean political refugees and students came to the U.S. for freedom and advanced studies. It is reported that there were approximately 900 Korean students studying in America from 1882 to 1940. The leaders of the Korean community in America who worked also for the independence of their country came from among these students. These leaders included Dr. Syngman Rhee, the first president of the Republic of South Korea, Ahn Chang-ho, Park Yong-man, and So Chae-pil (Philip Jaisohn), all of whom participated in both political reform (against the Korean Confucian authoritarian government) and freedom (from Japanese Imperialism),

¹⁷ Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 37.

¹⁸ Choy, *Koreans in America*, 73-77.

¹⁹ Choy, *Koreans in America*, 77, 257. It is well known that there is a popular saying among Korean Americans: “When two Japanese meet, they set up a business firm; when two Chinese meet, they open a Chinese restaurant, and when two Koreans meet, they establish a church.” Cited in Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 25. See also Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 107.

²⁰ Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 38.

²¹ Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 37. See also Choy, *Koreans in America*, 88-89.

along with the enthusiasm to learn Western technology and new political ideologies in the U.S.²² These immigrant leaders also were heavily influenced by Christian beliefs and ideas, which had shaped their reformed mind and worldviews.²³

The second wave of Korean immigrants, which happened after World War II and before the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965, was affected by the political, socioeconomic, and military situation in Korea. Shortly after having achieved emancipation from Japanese colonialism in 1945, Korea suffered from the Korean War (1950-1953), which resulted in the division of the nation. Because of the favorable relationship with the U.S. since the end of World War II, many South Koreans emigrated to the U.S. These immigrants included Korean wives of U.S. servicemen and their dependents, war orphans, political refugees, and some professionals, including students. It is reported that about 7,000 military wives, 7,000 adopted children, and 6,000 students reached the U.S. during this period.²⁴ Among these immigrants, as Yoo and Chung observe, “students and their families were the most visible part of this wave within Korean American communities and religious institutions,” mainly because “military brides and adoptees were often marginalized within the Korean American as well as other communities of which they were a part.”²⁵ Thus, “the presence of students and their families in existing religious institutions would serve as a precursor of things to come in the post-1965 period.”²⁶

²² See Choy, *Koreans in America*, 78-88.

²³ Yoo and Chung, "Introduction," 3.

²⁴ Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 38-39. See also Yoo and Chung, "Introduction," 3-4.

²⁵ Yoo and Chung, "Introduction," 4.

²⁶ Yoo and Chung, "Introduction," 4.

After the U.S. passed a new immigration law in 1965, which provided preferential treatment for the purpose of family reunion, the third wave of immigration started. The revised immigration legislation allowed Korean Americans to bring their relatives, such as spouses, children, parents, and siblings, to the U.S.²⁷ In addition, many Korean students, who wanted to do advanced studies, and professional workers, such as doctors, nurses, and pharmacists, were invited to come to the U.S.²⁸ Thus, the numbers of immigrants drastically increased: “at the peak in the mid-1980s, figures topped thirty thousand persons per year.”²⁹ According to the U.S. Census, only 70,598 Koreans lived in the U.S. in 1970, but it became 357,393 by 1980, 798,849 by 1990, and over one million by 2000.³⁰ Along with family reunion, other reasons for the immigration include a desire for a better life, more economic opportunity, further education for the adults and children, and the political instability or threat of war in Korea.³¹ Newly immigrated Koreans usually settled in big cities, such as Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, and promoted the increase of immigrant churches, temples, and other religious institutions. The growth and spread of Protestant Christianity in the immigrant communities were

²⁷ Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 39.

²⁸ Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 40. From 1953 to 1980, approximately 15,000 students came to America, and about 13,000 Korean doctors, nurses, and pharmacists arrived from 1966 to 1979.

²⁹ Yoo and Chung, "Introduction," 4. Since 1988, the numbers of Korean immigrants have declined, while “return migration” has increased. The main reasons for this change were the economic boom and industrial progress in Korea and sociocultural marginality and the reduced job market in the U.S. The 1988 World Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea was a big incentive for Korean Americans to decide to go back to Korea. See Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 33, 46-47; Jung Ha Kim, "Cartography of Korean American Protestant Faith Communities in the United States," in *Religions in Asian America*, ed. Pyong Gap Min and Jung Ha Kim, Critical Perspectives on Asian Americans Series (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002), 200-01.

³⁰ See Kim, "Cartography of Korean American Protestant Faith Communities in the United States," 196.

³¹ Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 45.

particularly impressive, and many newcomers who were not affiliated with churches in Korea became Christians after their arrival in America. This was in part because the churches provided not only religious space for the practice of faith and meaning, but also they provided “racial-ethnic space” where Korean immigrants found their social identity, ethnic distinctiveness, and cultural heritage of being Koreans supported, while struggling with the challenges and conflicts of living in the U.S.³²

Narratives of Korean American Christian Immigrants

As the specific processes and methods of qualitative research design that this dissertation employs have already been stated in detail in the previous chapter, we now take the journey of describing the narratives of the Korean American Christians who participated in my research.

The Cohort

The research data is based on six in-depth interviews, with a purposeful sample of three men and three women who are Korean American Christian immigrants. As the purpose of the research was to create a rich description of their experiences, rather than to explain them, a small sample was deemed appropriate.³³ All the research participants immigrated between 1971 and 2005, and thus all belong to the third-wave of immigration. Three participants arrived in the U.S. in the 1970s, one in the 1980s, and two in the 2000s. Their current age at the time of the interviewees ranged from the thirties to the sixties (1 thirties; 1 forties; 1 fifties; and 3 sixties). Their main reasons for immigration included: further education (3 participants); education for the children (1); and better job

³² Yoo and Chung, "Introduction," 4-5.

³³ See Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*; Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*.

opportunity (2). This result resonated with the history of Korean American immigration we have discussed earlier, in which the main motivations for immigration were further and better education, a desire for a better life, and more economic opportunity. One participant decided to come to the U.S. because of political instability and the lack of equal opportunity in Korea in the 1970s. All participants except one had graduated from college in Korea. One interviewee had finished her advanced studies in the U.S., while her husband was still doing his study. Another interviewee was currently pursuing his doctoral studies. Figure 1 shows a summary of the demographic statistics of the six interviewees.

<i>Interviewees</i>	Helen	Peggy	Andy	Linda	Harry	Chris
<i>Age</i>	63	57	64	36	68	45
<i>Gender</i>	Female	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male
<i>Occupation</i>	Small Business	Small Business	Auto Part Department	Organist	Retired	Graduate Student
<i>Year of Immigration</i>	1971	1987	1973	2005	1973	2002
<i>Education</i>	Unknown	College	College	Graduate School	College	Graduate School
<i>Purpose of Immigration</i>	Husband's Advanced Studies	Business, Daughter's Education	Job Opportunities	Advanced Studies (Music)	Job Opportunities	Advanced studies (Theology)
<i>Legal Status</i>	U.S. Citizen	U.S. Citizen	U.S. Citizen	F2	U.S. Citizen	F1

FIGURE 1. The Demographic Statistics of Research Participants.

Their overall experience of living in the U.S. was expressed with mixed feelings of excitement and hardship. Helen, a 63-year-old female interviewee, who came to the U.S. in the early 1970s for her husband's advanced studies, mentioned that before arriving in the States, she was excited to live in the U.S. because she had a “fantasy” about “America.” The reality of living in the U.S., however, was quite different than her fantasy and was even harsh for her, as her first job was to work in a factory where boiled chickens were cleaned and de-feathered, wearing a hair net, a rubber apron, and rubber

gloves, all day long. “In these days,” she stated, “all my American dream was scattered.” One of participants went through divorce in her pursuit of independence from her husband, because of unfairness in their relationship. Her decision to divorce would have been more difficult if she was in Korea. She remarried a Spanish American male who was twelve years younger than her, and she runs a small business on her own in order to manage financial independence. Two other interviewees, who arrived in the U.S. for advanced studies in the 2000s, remarked that they were anxious about the future which was not certain, and their temporary resident status in the States (“non-resident alien”) often made them uncomfortable living in the U.S. Among other challenges, language barriers, financial difficulties, and their children’s adjustment were primary issues that they had to deal with.

Their Experience of Marginality

The six interviewees described their experiences of being marginalized in U.S. society in diverse ways. The degree to which marginality was experienced depended upon the particular social environments of which an individual was part. It needs to be mentioned that our interviewees’ willingness to be interviewed and their experiences of marginalization cannot be considered a general representation of Korean Americans.³⁴ In general, in Korean culture, sharing experiences of marginality is a difficult and shameful task at both conscious and unconscious levels. In Korean culture, most people hesitate to share their painful and embarrassing stories with others, especially strangers, and no one wants to disclose a “secret” which might disgrace them. In addition, most of the interviewees are, by and large, people who have achieved some level of “success” in their

³⁴ For a detailed exploration of the adjustment and adaption of Korean Americans in U.S. culture in its relation to marginality, see Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 51-157 and Choy, *Koreans in America*, 239-52.

lives: owners of small but economically successful businesses; one holds a doctorate in music and is employed as a professional organist; the other is pursuing a Ph.D. Thus, their experience of marginality is likely to be less severe than other Korean Americans, such as undocumented immigrants, who are suffering from a harsh environment of oppression and injustice.

A middle-aged woman interviewee, who divorced and remarried, mentioned that she was living in two worlds—Korea and the U.S.—but that she did not feel that she belonged to either world fully.³⁵ In her business and home, she is an "Americanized" U.S. citizen, but she attends a Korean church to hear sermons offered in the Korean language. Even in the Korean church, however, she is not deeply involved in church activities, such as small group gatherings and other social and religious meetings, except worship and Bible study because, as a "Americanized" Korean, she feels she cannot find a common ground in conversation. At home, she cannot have "deep conversation" with her "American" husband because of deep-seated differences in their points of view. Jung Young Lee, a noted Korean American theologian, would say that her experience belongs to "in-betweenness," where "the marginal person has to live in these two worlds, which are not only different but often antagonistic to each other."³⁶

Andy, a 64-year-old male interviewee, who immigrated to the U.S. through family invitation in early 1970s, stated that he had felt "unfairness" while getting jobs after arriving in the U.S., because of his lack of English proficiency and limited job

³⁵ The Korean American theologian Sang Hyun Lee, a Princeton theology professor, confesses that he also lives "in an in-between world," as most Korean Americans do. See Sang Hyun Lee, "Liminality and Worship in the Korean American Context," in *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*, ed. David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung, The Asian American Experience (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 100-15. See also Sang Hyun Lee, *From a Liminal Place: An Asian American Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010).

³⁶ Lee, *Marginality*, 43.

opportunities. Although he graduated from college in Korea, majoring in electronic engineering, the jobs available in the U.S. were not deeply related to his specialties. Thus, except a short period of time when he worked in two electronic companies, he has worked as a gas station clerk, a taxi driver, and the owner of a liquor store for twenty years.

Interviewees who came to the U.S. for studies shared similar experiences of living as foreigners. Language-related difficulties (limited comprehension of classes and lectures, and thin social networks and friendships), financial pressure, and unfamiliarity with procedures in the U.S. related to everyday living (for example, credit scores, housing rentals, banking systems, etc.) were important factors that had contributed to their feelings of marginality. Linda, a 36-year-old church organist, expressed that she had undergone “injustice” because of her poor English communication skills and had felt like an “outsider” in her relationships with other students:

In the beginning of my study at the graduate school, my music professor said that ‘I am deeply impressed by your performance,’ but when the professor recognized that I was not able to understand English well, the professor ignored me. . . . I also felt like an outsider in that I cannot participate in a communication with other classmates.

One interviewee remarked that he did not have any particular experience of discrimination, but because of the difference in the social system between Korea and the U.S., he had to adjust to a new environment, which took time and energy. In sum, though the experience of marginality, discrimination, or injustice was different according to their social status and life circumstances, the participants in my qualitative research reported experiencing these inequalities after immigrating into the U.S.

Their Experience of Hope³⁷

What is hope? For my research participants, hope is deeply related to the future.³⁸ Not only materialistic hopes—such as a better job, a nice home, and a decent life—but also philosophical and religious hopes—intimate relationship with God, becoming a better Christian, living an honest life—are among important objects of their hopes. Most interviewees with children include raising their children well as a crucial part of their hope. In particular, raising children with Christian spirituality is a primary goal for the parents among my interviewees. They want their children to receive the best education possible and, at the same time, expect them to be faithful Christians who keep Christian values and virtues. My research participants also feel that hope is interrelated to the present situation. Chris, a 45-year-old doctoral student in religious studies, talked about the relationship between hope and the present.

It seems to me that hope is deeply related to the present life. If you are confident that you go a right direction to achieve your goals, you have hope even in the presence of difficult circumstances. Your attitude and standpoint on the present situation determines the way you hope. . . . In its relationship with the present, hope is also related to will. You want to do something and hope is the power to drive you to do it. Thus, hope is not only related to the future, but it also is related to the present.

In other words, the present moment is shaped by the way he projects himself into the future (“goals”), through which he finds strength to overcome any difficulties he is facing

³⁷ The interviewees are self-selected and this might situate their narrative of hope. That is, people who have trouble with hope may not have volunteered to participate in the interviewing. Thus, the narratives of these interviewees may reflect a more positive view in relation to hope.

³⁸ The Korean word for “hope” has two terms: *somang* and *himang*. Both words can be used interchangeably, but, in a delicate sense, *somang* has more religious connotation than *himang*. Therefore, Korean-language translations of the Bible tend to use the word *somang*, while *himang* is often used in everyday conversation. The primary meanings of both Korean words include wish, hope, desire, and expectation; thus *somang* and *himang* denote mainly the future dimension of human life.

in the present. Hope develops when he has in mind a certain future and lives accordingly.

Hope becomes a crucial resource that helps him navigate through his life.

In addition, for my interviewees hope is an attitude toward life, and life circumstances impact the way they perceive hope. Harry, a 68-year-old retiree, said, “I think we cannot ignore life circumstances. It will be very difficult to maintain a hopeful life in the situation of harsh environment in which even our existence is threatened. I suspect that I could not continue to hope if I lost everything, like Job did in the Bible.” For Harry, the circumstances in which we live influence the way we perceive hope.

Research participants saw that hope had volitional, emotional, and cognitive aspects. In its volitional aspect, hope is characterized by Chris as “a driving force, which helps to overcome challenges and difficulties in our lives.” For Linda, “Hope is like a kind of a pull or power that helps me when I am in difficult situations.” The interviewees' words are akin to John Macquarrie's, who says that “hope promotes affirmative courses of action.”³⁹ Thus, hope becomes an important factor that makes people endure difficulties in their pursuit of the achievement of goals. Hope has an emotional aspect as well. Chris indicated that hope is like “fresh water in a hot summer.” This means that hope provides, again, in Macquarrie's words, “an outgoing and trusting mood toward the environment.”⁴⁰ However, Peggy, a 57-year-old female interviewee, mentioned that “hope is not just an emotion. It is bigger and deeper than emotion, which is fluctuating.” Unlike emotion, which is ever-changing, according to Peggy, hope upholds our mood and atmosphere, and contributes to a better overall condition. Hope is also a thinking process through which an individual finds ways to go forward. Hope

³⁹ Macquarrie, *Christian Hope*, 11.

⁴⁰ Macquarrie, *Christian Hope*, 11.

involves a change of one's thoughts. Peggy said, "Hope is not the issue of the environment around you; it is rather the issue of your thoughts. You need to change your thoughts to be hopeful. If you believe God loves you, you can keep hopefulness." Thus, for Peggy, our cognitions play an essential role in our experience of hope.

Hope and Christian faith. Christian religion and hope are deeply intertwined in the experience of the Korean American Christians I interviewed. First of all, hope is based on confidence that God will help and guide their lives. Helen, a 63-year-old female who converted to Christianity after she immigrated to the U.S., commented:

If you know God well, you can do everything easily. As you are taught by your parents, if you believe in God sincerely, you are empowered to do everything. . . . Since I have believed in God, it has been given to me hope, courage, positive thinking, and confidence to do everything. . . . After having faith, I can endure better [in every circumstance] because of the confidence God would help me.

For Helen, hope is a gift from God that enables her to overcome challenges of everyday life.

Hope is also related to an eschatological vision. Peggy described her personal hope in this way: "My hope is to die as a Christian. . . . My hope is to become a genuine Christian, that is to say, to live like Jesus Christ. The truth of Christianity talks about two essential things: to love God vertically and to love others horizontally." Peggy did not articulate her concept of hope, but she had a specific Christian hope based on eschatology: "My hope is, after I die, to meet God who loves me so much." Peggy added that she believes in the benevolence of God ("God is good") and, though she has lived a difficult life (divorce, remarriage, empty nest syndrome, and menopause), she has a strong belief that God is always with her, as expressed in a popular gospel song: "Even though I am in

trial, I believe that God is with me.”⁴¹ To know and maintain the love of God, Peggy emphasized the importance of Bible study, reading religious books, and participating in worship services.

In addition, to be hopeful, an intimate relationship with the divine is pivotal. Linda said, “My hope is to have a good relationship with God. When I encounter with difficulties in my life, I ask God about what God wants to do through these difficulties. . . . God does not respond to me all the time, but God often gives me his words so that I can overcome adversity.” For Linda, “Hope is like a kind of a pull or power that helps me when I am in difficult situations.” On the other hand, Chris relates hope to vocation, or God’s calling.

Hope is another type of calling. Basically, calling is a mission given by God. And it becomes your hope. Vocation creates new hope. . . . If hope is a futuristic concept, faith, as a present and immediate power, is the internalization of hope. The Bible says, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Here “things hoped for” refers to hope, and “the assurance” is faith.

Thus, for the participants in my qualitative research, hope is deeply related to Christian faith: the presence and guidance of God, an eschatological vision, an intimate relationship with God, and a vocational connection to their lives. Through these testimonies, it can readily be seen that these Korean Americans understand hope in their Christian religious perspectives, which provide an overarching framework to operationalize hope.

Functions of hope. How does hope function in the lives of Korean Americans? What benefits does the hopeful attitude bring to Korean Americans? The research participants

⁴¹ These are part of the lyrics of a gospel song much beloved by Korean American Christians, entitled “We Will Keep Our Faith Alive.”

mentioned that hope had provided positive effects in their lives. Faith in God played a pivotal role in the formation of hopefulness. Helen told me that after having a Christian belief and the assurance of salvation, she has kept the power of the Holy Spirit, which enabled her to be a “roly-poly” person, a person who is not easily discouraged by challenges of life. Instead of pouring out complaints, doubts, and pessimistic words, which had been her usual attitude toward life before being a Christian, she mentioned that she spoke of “words of faith” as she began to realize the power and vitality of spoken words, and gave thanks to God in all circumstances with the belief that God’s will would be there. The change of her attitude toward life has enabled her to be more positive, and she has become less worried about her life. She also has used the power of the mind's eye, through which she imagines specific goals and expectations for the future. As the owner of a laundry business, she often prays to God, “Lord, I need your help. I have to have this much profit today to survive.” She has witnessed that her expectations and desires have often been fulfilled to have enough customers in her store. She even has applied an imaginative power—a type of prayer—to the future of her children, which she believes, has a positive influence on their future.

Interviewees also believe that a hopeful attitude helps people to endure adversity and to build up the future. Harry shares his view on the influence of a hopeful attitude toward life. Harry came to the U.S. in 1973, at the age of 31. He came as a single man, with special training as an auto mechanic. He married the next year and has had several jobs, including as a computer mechanic, a welding worker, and the owner of a printing shop and a grocery market. To run a printing shop, which he owned for three years, was extremely challenging for him because of the lack of skills and the manipulation of the

previous owner, who set up another printing shop nearby. He broke down from extreme stress, but experienced miraculous healing, which he believed was from God. Afterwards, he took over a grocery market and worked very hard (from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m.) for 20 years until his retirement in 2008. Except attending worship, he even worked on Sundays. He confessed that whenever he was in trouble, he laid on the floor, prostrating himself, and prayed to God. The resilience and courage to endure challenges in his life came from his belief in God who was merciful and the source of hopefulness.

Furthermore, the hopeful attitude helps one to develop a healthy self, which, as a result, promotes a good relationship with others. Chris talked about the benefits of a hopeful life.

I think that the hopeful attitude toward life influences our lives in a positive way. A hopeful life makes people alive and helps them to keep good relationships with others. You do not blame others. . . . The hopeful attitude leads you to treat others with hope. . . . Although I live with a pressure as an international student, who has limited financial resources, I can endure the pressure for I have hope which is achievable.

In a sense, for Chris, hope is a certain mindset which helps him to maintain his identity and integrity, and is contagious, in that his attitude influences others in some ways.

In sum, for my research participants, hope draws a positive impact upon them, helping them to overcome adversity. Hope helps them to build up their future and is related to imagining the future that is not yet realized. Hope also provides them the strong self-power which increases the possibility of their having better relationship with others.

Sources/Roots of hope. What are the sources of hope? Where does it come from?

Research participants responded to the question of the roots of hope in various ways.

Their relationships with their parents, especially with mother, are among the most

significant source of maintaining hopefulness. Three interviewees remarked that they could keep a hopeful attitude toward life because their mother had provided them emotional safety, assurance, trust, love, sacrifice, and prayer. Another important source of hopefulness also comes from belief in God, who is understood to be loving and trustworthy. The confidence that God will lead them with his unfailing love has a profound influence upon being hopeful: as Chris remarked, “God will lead my life with his unfailing love, though I am weak, imperfect, and fragile.” Religious resources, such as their pastors' sermons, Bible study, religious books on great believers, certain Bible passages (psalms, for example), and prayer are also important roots of hope. In addition, people around them become the source of hopefulness, because hope often develops through their relationships with others, by helping others, and/or by being helped by others. An eschatological vision is also a source of being hopeful. Helen mentioned that her hopefulness came from the conviction that she would go to heaven when she died: “There are no tears and sighs in heaven. No matter how difficult it is to live in this world, I have a place to go later.” Thus, for her, the eschatological idea is an important source of hopefulness, along with the love of her mother. In sum, a loving and trustworthy God, religious resources, human relationships, theological vision, such as an eschatological one, are the primary roots of hope, according to the research participants.

Nurturing hopefulness. In what circumstance is hopefulness nurtured? Participants in the interview see that hope is nurtured in their lives through various means. Helen emphasized the role of parents in the formation of hopefulness. If parents showed hopefulness in their lives, children would learn from their parents. She highlighted the fact that parents should be a role model for their children. Peggy stressed the cognitive

aspect of hopefulness. She believes that hope is not determined by circumstances; it is rather the issue of a mind-set. She mentioned, “To be hopeful, you need to change your thought. When you believe that God loves you, you cannot help but be hopeful.” When customers in her store asked her about why she always looked happy, her response was: “I don’t have any reason to be unhappy.” According to Peggy, cognitive assurance that is based on God’s love enables one to be hopeful. Linda provided a similar, but more religious, response than Peggy. Linda mentioned that when she read and meditated on Bible passages, God often gave her his words, which became the seed of hope for her. It was possible because she believed that the message God gave to her would be fulfilled in the future. Thus, reading the scriptures, meditation, and a prayerful life are her way of nurturing hopefulness. Harry and Chris have opposite perspectives on the nurture of hope. According to Harry, hope is nurtured when the circumstance you are in are promising—for instance, when your business goes well; when your children are successful; and when your future looks good. In contrast, Chris believes that hope can be developed in a situation where you are in deep despair.

When I think that there is no way out, blocked by a huge wall in my life, paradoxically hope often comes out of that situation. In a situation where nobody can help me, I seek God more eagerly. When there is nothing to lean on, though sometimes you may be stricken with despair, you attempt to grasp the rope of hope more eagerly.

I will discuss the dynamics of hope further in later chapters, but thus far I can summarize that, for these Korean American Christians, hope is nurtured through various means, which include human interactions (with parents, friends, and others), faith in God, cognitive reappraisal of self, the scriptures, meditation, prayer, and life circumstances.

Defining hope. How, then, do the interviewees define hope? I will provide some of definitions they have shared with me. It should be mentioned that in their definitions of hope, the place of God is central because all were Christians.⁴² The way they defined hope is different: some provided direct definitions, while others offered poetic and metaphorical ones. Helen defined hope as “to know God well,” which helped her know herself. “When I know who I am, I have confidence, and when I feel that I am happy, I have in mind that I can do everything.” For Helen, hope is an inner strength which provides her the assurance of herself. Peggy did not provide a definition of hope; rather she mentioned her personal hope: “My hope is, after I die, to meet God who loves me so much.” Here hope has an eschatological implication. The eschatological hope this interviewee expresses is based on her belief in a loving God. For Andy and Linda, hope is a personal relationship with God. “My hope is that God comes to me and takes care of me” (Andy). “My hope is to walk with God” (Linda). Harry provided a broader and more abstract image of hope: “My hope is the in-dwelling of God’s kingdom, God’s hope, God’s joy into my soul, which surpasses my current life situation and circumstance. To achieve the Kingdom of God in my life is my hope.” He differentiated these “spiritual” hopes from this-worldly hopes, such as goal achievement, wealth, the success of children, expensive homes, and fancy cars. Chris provided a very poetic definition of hope: “hope is, for me, when you feel there is no way out, you hear a whisper that says you will be fine, that there is a way out, a whisper that somebody speaks softly beside you. It is a whisper from outside, from God.” For Chris, hope is an external input which comes from

⁴² It is interesting that none mentioned that Jesus is central in their conceptualization of hope explicitly. One of interviewees mentioned that she wanted to live like “Jesus Christ.” Another interviewee used the term the “Lord” rather than using “God” or “Jesus.” Though most did not mention “Jesus,” it should not mean that Jesus was not central for them in that for Koreans, the terms “Jesus” and “God” can be used interchangeably.

outside of human self. Through these various expressions to describe hope, along with the discussions of hope, a tentative definition follows: *Hope is an inner strength which gives the power to be resilient, imaginative, and relational in the circumstances in which we live, a hope that is based on a loving, trustworthy, and compassionate God.*

Korean American Ways to Understand Hope: Hope in its Sociocultural Context

In this section, I briefly describe four distinctive aspects of hope that emerged in the experience of these six Korean American immigrants: (1) hope as a resilient spirit; (2) hope as an imaginative process; (3) hope as a relational experience; (4) hope as a spiritual resource.

Hope as a Resilient Spirit

The interviewees tended to understand hope in its relation to resilience to life challenges. By resilience I mean an ability to recover from, adjust easily to, or resist being affected by, misfortune or change.⁴³ It is buoyancy, exuberance, and the power of recovery from adversity, difficulties, and predicament. As seen above, research participants, by and large, have experienced marginality, discrimination, or injustice in the society where they live. The color of their skin, the language barrier they experience, their financial situation, and/or their legal status in the U.S. contributed to the

⁴³ I have consulted the following online dictionaries: Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, "Resilience," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resilience> (accessed September 14, 2010); Oxford English Dictionary Online, "resilience," Oxford English Dictionary, http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50204032?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=resilience&first=1&max_to_show=10 (accessed September 14, 2010). There is a vast psychosocial literature on resilience, along with the growing literature on immigrant experiences. For a good introduction to a psychosocial understanding of resilience, see Ann S. Masten, J. J. Cutuli, Jannette E. Herbers, and Marie-Gabrielle J. Reed, "Resilience in Development," in Snyder and Lopez, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, 117-31. In this article, resilience is defined in relation to positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity, and it is claimed that protective and promotive factors—such as self-regulation skills, good parenting, community resources, and effective schools—contribute to the promotion of resilience. For a discussion of resilience in the context of Korean American experience, see, for instance, Hei-Sung Lee et al., "Correlates of Resilience in the Face of Adversity for Korean Women Immigrating to the U.S.," *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 10, no. 5 (2008): 415-22.

predicament of being marginalized. But these formidable obstacles were not able to reduce their capacity to keep hoping, because of the resilience of these Korean Americans.

It is known that Koreans are very quick to adjust to any culture of which they are a part, and that they are very resilient.⁴⁴ Korea has a long history of 5,000 years, along with its rich cultural heritage, language system, and beautiful landscape, but Korean history is also filled with war, struggle, and conflict.⁴⁵ Geographically, Korea is surrounded by three powerful and belligerent countries—China, Japan, and Russia. Though there have been civil wars in the Korean peninsula, Korea has always been exposed to the menace of war from outside and has experienced many invasions from outside peoples. Accordingly, the Korean people have found it necessary to defend fiercely their identity as a separate culture. Through these experiences, Koreans have learned how to cope with difficulties and struggles resulting from traumatic events. The resilient power in Koreans has come about from this historical background. Though a small country—the combined territories of both North Korea and South Korea are about the same size as the state of Minnesota—Korea has never been totally conquered by any nations, except the 35 years of the Japanese occupancy. Resilience, thus, became part of the nature of being Koreans. In addition, the influence of Christianity in Korean culture has strengthened the power of resilience further, because Christianity is by nature a religion of hope. The Christian gospel, which arguably can be summarized by two terms,

⁴⁴ The renowned Korean American historian Bong-youn Choy claimed that Koreans' quickness to adjust and resiliency partly came from the unique history of Korea: its geographical location (surrounded by three powerful countries—China, Russia and Japan) and its struggle with "power politics" (e.g., as a Japanese colony). See Choy, *Koreans in America*, 3-41. See also Hurh, *The Korean Americans*, 3-27.

⁴⁵ Among many books on the history of Korea, I recommend the following: Young Woo Han, *A Review of Korean History*, trans. Chaibong Hahm, 3 vols. (Seoul: Kyongsaewon, 2010); Ki-baek Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); Woo-keun Han, *The History of Korea*, trans. Kyung-shik Lee (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1974).

suffering (represented by the crucifixion) and hope (manifested by resurrection), resonates with Korean history. From suffering, Koreans have learned the importance of hoping.

My research participants provide evidence to support the close relationship between hope and resilience. Hope that is deeply rooted in Christian belief becomes the primary source for the capacity to overcome difficulties in their lives. Linda mentions her experience of living in the U.S. with its relation to hope: “I cannot live without hope. . . . Hope is the power for me to endure difficulties in my life, and without hope, I cannot get through the way.” For her, intimate relationship with God is a way to keep hopeful in the midst of challenges of life. Chris seems to agree with her: “Hope is a driving force, which helps to overcome challenges and difficulties in our lives.” He was able to maintain a buoyant spirit while living as a “non-resident alien,” because he did not lose hope for the future. Hope, in this sense, can be described as the resilient power that promotes vitality, exuberance, and buoyancy.

From a clinical perspective, the resilient power of hopefulness is related to its role as a coping mechanism. People who are hopeful have better coping abilities against illness, stress, and trauma. These things will be explored in greater depth in the chapters that follow. Here we may simply note that hope, in its relation to adaptive coping strategies, can lead to expanded functioning of body, mind, and spirit: more positive emotions, more adaptive thoughts and behaviors, and more healthy relationships with others and the world. On the other hand, it has been reported that “the absence of hope

and adaptive coping strategies, likewise, can lead to the more constricted outcome of hopelessness or despair.”⁴⁶

Hope as an Imaginative Process

Another important aspect of hope for my research participants is that hope is deeply related to the ability to imagine possibilities for the future. In a sense, to be hopeful is to be able to imagine the open-ended future. Imagination, the ability to create mental representations of objects, persons, or physical and social realities not immediately related to the senses, is among the most distinctive characteristics of being human. William Lynch suggests that imagination is “the gift that envisions what cannot yet be seen, the gift that constantly proposes to itself that the boundaries of the possible are wider than they seem.”⁴⁷ The imaginative ability enables us to overcome the immediate circumstance, projecting the possible into the future. Richard Bauckham and Trevor Hart, a New Testament scholar and a systematic theologian, respectively, propose that hope is an “activity of imagination” that helps us to “transcend the boundaries of the present, to go beyond the given, outwards and forwards, in search of something more, something better, than the given affords us.”⁴⁸ Hope, thus, can be understood as a human ability to imagine a future which is essentially open.

The interviewees have articulated the imaginative nature of hope. Although not all of them talked about hope in its relation to imagination explicitly, the way they understand hope is deeply connected to imagination. Helen seems to understand hope as

⁴⁶ See Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 19.

⁴⁷ William F. Lynch, *Images of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless* (New York: New American Library, 1966), 27.

⁴⁸ Bauckham and Hart, *Hope against Hope*, 52.

an act of imagination and utilizes the power of imagination in her everyday life. Using imagination, she draws specific goals or expectations for the future in her mind, which are usually related to her work and home. She confesses that she has witnessed that “deep desires in her heart”—hopes—are accomplished through imagination. However, these hopes are not totally disconnected to reality, for these are based on fact and existence in her life. Thus, for her, hope is a way of imagining possibilities in the future, maintaining a realistic perspective. Andy, who immigrated into the U.S. in 1973, though he did not have specific hopes for the future at the time of his arrival in the U.S., imagined a future which is better than now, for he had no job in Korea. The desire to have a better future was the primary cause for him to cope with challenges in his life. Imagination is not limited to objects or success; it also can be applied to other areas. Harry remarks that his hope is to live an honest life. By an honest life, he means a life which “does not give bribes or cheat others.” As the main reason for him to immigrate to the U.S. was social absurdities spread in Korea in the 1970s, he imagined a life in which kindness and honesty are valued. He endeavored to follow his own rules for life, such as justice, honesty, and integrity, and, in raising his children, he applied these rules to them. For him, hope is the manifestation of imagination which is not overcome by the current situation and envisions a better life style.

As an imaginative process, hope sees possibilities for the future, creates new perspectives, and envisages a better reality. Creative imagination does not divorce from the present possibilities but rather envisions new options in the future. In a theological sense, hope is an act of imagination in which God plays a pivotal role to bring about hope

through imagination, for instance, as expressed through the mouths of prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, which we will discuss in later chapters.

Hope as a Relational Experience

From the research participants' responses, we also notice that relationships play an important part in the formation of hope. Interactions with others, such as family members, friends, and God, have impacted the way in which they perceive hope. Most of the interviewees have mentioned that the primary source of hopefulness comes from the relationships with their parents. In the development of a hopeful attitude, according to the research participants, the function of a mother is particularly important, for the mother usually plays a central role in raising her children and is expected to provide the support and love that are necessary for the survival of an infant, especially in the early years of her caring. In this sense, Erik Erikson's insight is pivotal because Erikson suggests that hope is a developmental process. It is based upon early relationships in which persons first learn to trust, and it continues to develop through cumulative experiences in society, as we will discuss in later chapters.⁴⁹ Whether healthy or not, mother-child relationships, with their strong bonds and attachments, are significant in Korean culture.

Hope is also described by research participants as something that occurs between persons—a relational process inspired by love. One of interviewees mentioned that interactions with other persons became the source of hopefulness. Persons can influence another's hope through the gift of presence, or by communicating positive expectations

⁴⁹ For Erikson's developmental theory and the discussion of the significance of hope, see Erik H. Erikson and Joan M. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed*, extended version ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997); Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*.

and exhibiting a confidence in the individual's ability to overcome difficulties.⁵⁰ In this way, relationships play a major role in the development and maintenance of hopefulness. In a sense, hope is contagious within a community where an individual who has a "low" level of hope may be encouraged to maintain hopefulness through staying in the community.⁵¹ Paul Pruyser emphasizes the relational and contagious nature of hope when he says, "One hopes with, through and sometimes for someone else. Hoping is basically a shared experience. Hence also the contagiousness of hoping."⁵² This gives us an important insight that may be utilized in our practice of care, because through attentive listening, warm and honest response, and wise and effective intervention, hope can be generated in the lives of persons who are seeking care.

To the research participants, the relationship with God is also a significant source of hope. In a Christian perspective, it may be manifested through a "clear identification and reliance upon God or Jesus Christ, involvement in a spiritual community . . . parish, or congregation, and religious practices such as prayers, scripture readings," or Bible studies.⁵³ The confidence that God would protect, guide, and take care of them through God's unfailing love and mercy gives them a profound base on which to maintain hopefulness. In a sense, the spiritual or transcendental dimension of hope is among the most powerful source of hope, because it provides one the strength to overcome difficulties, resist the status quo, and sustain a sense of certainty about that which is uncertain and has not yet been proven ("faith").

⁵⁰ See Ezra Stotland, *The Psychology of Hope* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969).

⁵¹ Herbert, *Living Hope*, 29.

⁵² Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," 95.

⁵³ Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 8.

Hope as a Spiritual Resource

As can be seen clearly above, the hope the research participants convey is primarily Christian hope. The Christian nature of hope takes an important dimension in Korean American experience, becoming a primary spiritual resource for living. Christian hope is different from positive thinking, mere optimism, and illusion, which all are human inventions and have no real ground.⁵⁴ Christian hope is a hope based on faith in a loving, benevolent, and trustworthy God. Peggy remarks that “trust in God” is the source of hope in her life and that, as she believes God’s love, she can keep hopeful regardless of her situation. Linda also mentions that hope comes from the intimate relationship with God who listens to her prayers and responds to her favorably. For Helen, the confidence that God would help and guide her life is her root of hope. Thus, God’s unfailing love, support, guidance, and presence are the primary source of hope for these Koreans.

Since God is the primary provider of hope, who knows the best options for them, the research participants are not easily disappointed and discouraged by the failure of achieving their goals and dreams. In her interview, Helen, who has converted to Christianity after arriving at the U.S., shares her experience of being a Christian. According to her, Christian belief helps her to become like a “roly-poly,” seldom dispirited by challenges of life. Rather than falling into doubts, complaints, and depressing modes, she learns to find meanings even in undesirable situations (failure, disappointment, and loss), giving thanks to God in all circumstances. In a sense, Christian hope is not conditioned by challenges in her lives; rather it provides vision, resilience, and an enduring ability to transcend disappointments that she meets in her life.

⁵⁴ More detailed discussion regarding the differences between hope and other seemingly similar concepts will follow in later chapters.

Chris describes the origin of hope like this: “Hope comes from the promise of God, not from an individual’s ability, personality, and ambition, etc. Even though the present situation may challenge us, we can still hope, for we have faith in God who is with us, doing his best work.” Since Chris believes that God is working for him to provide the best opportunities, Christian hope enables him to be confident in every circumstance.

In addition, Christian hope is eschatological in nature, for our final and ultimate hope will be achieved in *eschaton* (the end of the present world). Two research participants articulate the significance of an eschatological vision. Helen mentions that she is always hopeful because she is convinced that she will go to heaven when she dies: “There are no tears and sighs in heaven. No matter how difficult it is to live in this world, I have a place to go later.” For Helen, the eschatological imagination becomes a crucial source of hope in her life. Peggy also states that her final hope is to meet God after her death: “My hope is, after I die, to meet God who loves me so much.” The eschatological hope these two interviewees express is based on their belief in a loving God. Although these two participants talk about the assurance and excitement of going to heaven and meeting with God in the final day, it is important to note that they also emphasize living in this world with faith and enthusiasm. Both of them have enjoyed their lives and tried to do their best to live a meaningful life. In fact, the eschatological vision has enabled them to live an “abundant” life in this world, helping them to endure the immediate moment. In this way, the eschatological idea bolsters them to stay hopeful and manage their life in a meaningful and resilient way.

Having explored in this chapter the lived experience of Korean American Christian immigrants voiced by the six research participants, I turn in the next chapter to

a focused examination of psychosocial literature that informs our understanding and conceptualization of hope.

Chapter 3

Psychosocial Understanding of Hope: The Hopeful Self

This is our classic image of hope: overcoming difficulty, liberating the self from darkness, escaping from some kind of prison. The sense of hope is: there is a way out. The sense of hopelessness is: there is no way out, no exit.

—William F. Lynch, *Images of Hope*

Hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive.

—Erik H. Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*

In a practical theological exploration of hope, it is important to attend to the voices of the social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, and medical and nursing sciences. Multidisciplinary reflection assists in the construction of richer and more concrete descriptions of hope and its dynamics. This chapter draws primarily on psychosocial literature to articulate the etiology, development, and nature of hope. I utilize insights that come from various resources, such as developmental psychology, psychological research, nursing science, cognitive theory, as well as pastoral theology, in order to understand a psychosocial dimension of hope.

The main argument of this chapter is expressed in five main points. First, hope evolves, develops, and fluctuates according to the given situation where we live. Hope is not a fixed stance, but part of the ever-changing dynamics of our human existence. Second, hope is socially and culturally conditioned. Hope does not exist in a vacuum, in that our interactions with others in various circumstances, such as family, school, church, and society, impact our way of perceiving and experiencing hope. Third, the hopeful attitude influences our whole being—body, mind, and spirit. As a protective mechanism, hope plays an important role in our physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being.

Fourth, hope and coping are deeply intertwined. Regardless of the various views of hope as emotion, cognition, will, or disposition, hope has beneficial effects not only for the individual but also for societies and nations. Fifth and lastly, hope is often related to our ability to imagine the future.

The argument of this chapter is divided into three main sections: (1) The Etiology of Hope, (2) The Development of Hope, and (3) The Nature of Hope. Through these explorations of hoping, I endeavor to develop a psychosocial understanding of hope that will be incorporated into the construction of a practical theology of hope in chapter five.

The Etiology of Hope

This section explores the etiology of the hopeful self, along with discussion of hope as an essential human virtue, primarily based on Erik Erikson's theory of human development and its expansion by pastoral theologian Donald Capps. It is emphasized that the relationship between an infant and a mother (or mothering persons) shapes a child's mindset toward herself and the world. In addition, cognitive theory regarding the origin of hope is also introduced. The main purpose of this section is to set a foundation to understand the origins of hope.

The Eriksonian View

Psychologist Erik Erikson is well known for his seminal life cycle theory, which includes eight psychosocial stages, the schedule of virtues, and the stages of the ritualization of human experience.¹ I am concerned here with the schedule of virtues,

¹ Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 2nd rev. and enl. ed. (New York: Norton, 1963), chap. 7; Erik H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle: Selected Papers* (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), chap. 2; Erik H. Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility: Lectures on the Ethical Implications of Psychoanalytic Insight* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), chap. 4; Erik H. Erikson, *Toys and Reasons: Stages in the Ritualization of Experience* (New York: Norton, 1977). Although we appreciate Erikson's development view, it is important to note the main critiques of his theory. First, Erikson has been criticized because of his idea that there are "stages" that are normative. Erikson believes that an individual either

focusing primarily on the origins of the hopeful self. In his article, “Human Strength and the Cycle of Generations,” Erikson proposes a schedule of virtues to correspond to the eight stages of the life cycle.² By virtue, Erikson means, following the old English usage, “inherent strength” or “active quality” and refers to the “undiminished potency of well-preserved medicines and liquors.”³ Thus, for Erikson, virtue is certain human qualities of strength, which help us to maintain dignity, courage, and spirit throughout our life. These virtues and their corresponding stages are *hope* (basic trust vs. basic mistrust), *will* (autonomy vs. shame and doubt), *purpose* (initiative vs. guilt), *competence* (industry vs. inferiority), *fidelity* (identity vs. identity confusion), *love* (intimacy vs. isolation), *care* (generativity vs. stagnation), and *wisdom* (integrity vs. despair and disgust).

Erikson places “hope” among the eight, giving it a special priority, as it is placed in the first life-cycle stage. Erikson writes, “Hope is both the earliest and the most

resolves a conflict, obtaining the characteristic goal of that stage, or the person does not resolve the conflict, reaching the opposite pole of that stage. Erikson neglects the possibility that there are varying degrees of resolution for each conflict. Some people are able to move smoothly through the eight stages of development while others may have more difficulty. Therefore, Erikson’s theory may not be an appropriate way to explain the development of all people. Second, related to the first criticism, is that Erikson’s theory may be questioned as to whether his stages must be regarded as sequential, and only occurring within the age he suggests. For instance, there is debate as to whether one stage needs to happen before other stages can be completed. However, Erikson states that each of these processes occur throughout the lifetime in one form or another, and he emphasizes these “phases” only because it is at these times that the conflicts become most prominent. Third, Erikson’s theory seems to have the possibility of cultural bias. His view reflects the norms of modern Western culture, thus it may not be applicable to other cultures, such as Korean American culture, in the same way he describes. Lastly, critics of Erikson’s theory claim that his theory is more applicable to boys than to girls, especially the second stage of “autonomy vs. shame and doubt.” For many feminist theorists, Erikson’s theory is seen as gender-biased. However, despite these criticisms, many have found Erikson’s theory a useful framework for analyzing human development. Although I do not accept Erikson’s theory as normative, I find his theory highly applicable to the psychosocial development of Korean Americans.

² Erik H. Erikson, “Human Strength and the Cycle of Generations,” in *Insight and Responsibility*, 111-57.

³ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 113.

indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive.”⁴ In this way, he points out that hope is the most important virtue in a developmental sense. Why does Erikson believe that hope is “the most indispensable virtue” among others, locating it in the earliest stage of life? Erikson suggests that hope is the basis for all the other virtues because strengths build upon preceding strengths.⁵ “If a hopeful orientation to life fails to develop,” Donald Capps states, “all subsequent strengths . . . are thereby diminished.”⁶ In a sense, every other strength heavily depends on the virtue of hope. Erikson has named the earliest positive human attitude as “trust,” which psychoanalyst Therese Benedek calls “confidence.”⁷ For Erikson, hope is the very thing that sustains life “even where confidence is wounded, trust impaired.”⁸ As a basic virtue, hope sustains us even in a situation where there are no objective grounds for trust. As Capps maintains, “the very fact that our trust is constantly countered by experiences which evoke mistrust is basis for viewing hope as the basic strength that sustains human life.”⁹ Hope as a basic human strength exists without the fulfillment of particular hopes. Erikson writes,

Hope, once established as a basic quality of experience, remains independent of the verifiability of ‘hopes,’ for it is in the nature of our maturation that concrete

⁴ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 115.

⁵ According to Erikson, there is continuity in the different phases of human life. Erikson calls it the “epigenetic principle.” Humans grow and develop on the basis of a “ground plan.” One phase presupposes the other and builds on it. Each phase brings new challenges. If one cannot cope with these challenges, a crisis results. See Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 134-41; Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 269-74, 65, 34-38; Erikson and Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed*, 25-34.

⁶ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 30.

⁷ Erik H. Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 102. Erikson refers to Benedek’s work, but does not give a citation.

⁸ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 115. See also Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 247-51.

⁹ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 30.

hopes will, at a time when a hoped-for event or state comes to pass, prove to have been quietly superseded by a more advanced set of hopes.¹⁰

In this way, hope becomes a way of life, an “attitude toward life,” not solely dependent upon the attainment of particular hopes.¹¹

Contribution of Mothering Persons

In what ways, then, does hope originate in human life? Theologically speaking, we may assume that the hopeful attitude of an infant would come from the divine as an “innate” gift. One example would be the smile of the infant, which seems to be inherent, though certain basic requirements need to be met for the infant to laugh, such as comfortable bedding, pleasant food, and basic relational support. In a psychosocial perspective, however, the hopeful self basically derives from human *relationship*, especially from the relationship between a child and a mother or mothering persons.

Erikson talks about the important role of mothering persons.

Hope relies for its beginnings on the new being’s first encounter with *trustworthy maternal persons*, who respond to his need for *intake* and *contact* with warm and calming envelopment and provide food both pleasurable to ingest and easy to digest, and who prevent experience of the kind which may regularly bring too little too late.¹²

Through such responses, the mothering figure provides “a convincing pattern of providence” in which hopes are met and hopefulness is inherently rewarding.¹³

¹⁰ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 117.

¹¹ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 31.

¹² Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 116. [Emphasis in original.] Although Erikson asserts that the “mother-child relationship” is the primary instiller of hope, at least in early childhood, Erikson does not exclusively talk about a mother, but mothering persons. Mothering persons could be fathers, grandparents, siblings, other significant family members, and, maybe, even nannies as long as they can provide security, attachment, and a bond that a child needs. The reason that Erikson emphasizes the “mothering” nature of caregiving is that, in his culture, like most others, the mother is often the primary caregiver to provide an infant with interactive care.

¹³ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 116.

In this milieu, Erikson emphasizes the quality of the caregiver, usually the mother, as the “coherent being,” along with “the thing world” as a necessary “object.” For the infant to be able to keep hope, it is mandatory to have, Erikson argues, “the secure apperception of an ‘object.’”¹⁴ When the infant can “perceive the *enduring quality* of the *thing world*” around her and experience her caregiver as “a *coherent being*, who reciprocates the infant’s physical and emotional needs in expectable ways,” she can manage to keep hoping because these two objects—the “thing world” and the “coherent being”—are for the infant “the first knowledge, the first verification, and thus the basis of hope.”¹⁵ Among the two objects, however, the existence of the “coherent being” is particularly important, because the caregiver is the original verifier not only of the world of persons but also of the world of things. Erikson writes, “To the human infant, his [*sic*] mother *is* nature.”¹⁶ Actually, the mothering person becomes both “coherent being” and “thing world” for the infant, and through her care, the infant learns the enduring quality of things as well as of beings. That is the reason why Erikson highlights the distinctive role of the caretaking person as the basis of hope: “She must *be* that original verification, which, later, will come from other and wider segments of reality. All the self-verifications, therefore, begin in that inner light of the mother-child-world.”¹⁷ The significance of the mother as the “coherent being” for the infant may have implications for the way pastoral caregivers offer care, which will be discussed later chapters.

¹⁴ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 116.

¹⁵ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 117. [Emphasis in original.]

¹⁶ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 117. [Emphasis in original.]

¹⁷ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 117. [Emphasis in original.]

A Cognitive Theoretical View

Cognitive theory also provides a view that shows the birth and growth of hope in an individual's life. According to psychologist C. R. Snyder, hope is a "type of goal-directed thinking in which the protagonists perceive themselves as being capable of producing routes to desired goals, along with the motivations to initiate and sustain usage of those routes."¹⁸ Snyder suggests that hope is established in the infant-to-toddler stages.¹⁹ A newborn develops pathway thoughts through sensing and perceiving external stimuli ("what is out there"), learning temporal linkages between events, and forming goals, and this process occurs from birth to 12 months.²⁰ The child typically learns agentic thinking between 12 to 30 months, when she is able to recognize herself as an agent (the knowledge of selfhood), thereby perceiving herself as the instigator of certain actions. Self-recognition, when paired with the infant's insight that she can reach a desired goal, forms the basis for agency thoughts. By learning both pathways thinking and agency thinking, children can produce goal-directed movement in their lives. Thus, according to Snyder, two-year-old toddlers can initiate actions toward a goal, and basic components of hope—pathway thoughts and agency thoughts—are built upon over the subsequent childhood and adult years.²¹

Everyone encounters barriers in their lives. Cognitive theory asserts that it is important to understand the role these barriers play in our lives. Since life places impediments in our paths, hopeful thinking is needed in order to learn how to deal with

¹⁸ C. R. Snyder, "Genesis: The Birth and Growth of Hope," in *Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, & Applications*, ed. C. R. Snyder (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000), 25.

¹⁹ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 75-89.

²⁰ Snyder, "Genesis: The Birth and Growth of Hope," 26-28.

²¹ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 82-83.

such barriers. When a child encounters blockages to their goals, according to cognitive theory, hopeful thinking plays a significant role to navigate these challenges. The hopeful child might attempt to find alternative routes to reach her goals or seek assistance from her caregivers. These barriers help children not only to learn that they have capacities to generate possible alternative pathways but also to show how important the continued efforts are to the process (i.e., the agentic thoughts).²²

Like Erikson's developmental theory, Snyder's cognitive view suggests that hope originates from interpersonal relationship with others, especially with primary caregivers such as mothers.²³ Snyder believes that goal-directed hopeful thinking arises in the context of other people who teach hope. The caregiver provides interactive care, helping a child to perceive her own security, to maintain secure attachment, and to develop a strong bond. This attentive care promotes a sense of empowerment and goal-directed hopeful thinking. The caregiver also can teach the child how to form goals, find alternative routes, and maintain the motivation to pursue desired goals. Thus, adults who are high in hope often become role models for children by showing them their views about relationships, forming strong healthy attachments to others, and helping them set up desirable goals. The opposite scenario is also possible—children may lose hope

²² Snyder, "Genesis: The Birth and Growth of Hope," 29-31. It is also true that not every child can manage to develop these important capacities. For the causes and phenomenon of losing hopeful thinking, see Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 115-61; Alicia Rodriguez-Hanley and C. R. Snyder, "The Demise of Hope: On Losing Positive Thinking," in *Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, & Applications*, ed. C. R. Snyder (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000), 39-54.

²³ Snyder, "Genesis: The Birth and Growth of Hope," 31. See also Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 87-89.

because of the lack of a supportive environment, poor attachments with mature adults, and the neglect of caregivers.²⁴

The Development of Hope

How, then, does hope develop through the course of our lives? In this section, we look into how the hopeful self is maintained through the Eriksonian second stage of human development, in which autonomy is a critical developmental goal for living. I also explain the enduring aspect of hope in human life—the ability to overcome the obstacles and challenges that we confront in our lives. Furthermore, we examine how cognitive theory explains the development of hopeful thinking across later childhood years. In addition, we discuss the way culture influences our perception of hope.

Hope Develops

Developmentally speaking, as mentioned earlier, hope originates from the interactions between the infant and the mothering figure, but the hopefulness of the infant transcends this relationship when she grows. In other words, “the mothering person is the child’s first verification of hope, but the child grows, its sphere of activity expands and hopes are no longer limited to expectations of the maternal person.”²⁵ Erikson writes, “The gradual widening of the infant’s horizon of active experience provides, at each step,

²⁴ Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 43-46. Michael Mahoney provides a list that shows the main conditions under which children can maintain resilience in the midst of neglect, loss, and abuse: (1) early awareness that one’s parents are not functioning well; (2) identification and frequent use of alternative persons as sources of security, nurturance, and developmental identification; (3) early identification and refinement of a special talent that opened new developmental paths and social networks; (4) high motivation to develop, often expressed in unusual tenacity and intensity of activity; (5) a tendency to experience frustrations and even traumas as challenges and opportunities for development. Cited in Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 46. See also Michael J. Mahoney, *Human Change Processes: The Scientific Foundations of Psychotherapy* (New York: BasicBooks, 1991).

²⁵ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 47.

verifications so rewarding that they inspire new hopefulness.”²⁶ Thus, as Capps mentions, “the child’s whole environment becomes a place for hope.”²⁷ When the child increases her agency, she also develops a greater capacity to abandon hope, to “transfer disappointed hopes to better prospects,” and to train her expectations “on what promises to prove possible.”²⁸ With continuous development, an individual learns to accept change, new prospects, and possibilities in one’s life. In this process, there are likely to be “more experiences of unrealized, inappropriate, and impossible hopes.”²⁹

It is striking to see that hope can become more “flexible” and “adaptable” when we meet more unpredictable settings. We may become more tolerant not to have the exact object of our hopes, but accept an object that has a similar worth. Furthermore, we can learn to discern what we desire and what is possible, which enables us to be more balanced and realistic. An important thing is, as Capps emphasizes, that we can maintain hopefulness even if we are not able to attain what we hope for. “This continued hopefulness arises partly from our increased capacity for renunciation of our desires but

²⁶ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 117. It needs to be mentioned that Erikson’s view may not be true for every child. Not every child achieves the “new hopefulness” Erikson describes. Snyder offers a helpful analysis on the “demise of hope.” According to Snyder, without a supportive environment—physical, emotional, and psychological support—and a solid attachment to their caregivers, the child’s capacity to develop a hopeful self is severely damaged. Familial and social abuse and neglect, disability, chronic pain, and illness also contribute to the loss of hope, not only for children, but also for adults. See Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 43-50.

²⁷ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 47.

²⁸ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 117. Snyder helps us understand how the child manages to develop “greater capacity” with “disappointed hopes.” When a desired goal is blocked, a “hopeful” child can navigate to resolve this barrier by attempting to find possible alternative routes or seeking help from other resources, such as her caregivers. She might also try to set up different goals that are attainable. These goals could be “better prospects” or at least desirable new ones. On the contrary, a child who tends to have “low” hope may not be able to work on generating possible routes to reach the goals, and lose the motivation to pursue her goals. In that case, “disappointed hopes” may not be transferred into “better prospects,” which results in the abandonment of her hopes. See Snyder, “Genesis: The Birth and Growth of Hope,” 29-31; Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 43-46.

²⁹ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 32.

primarily from the projective character of hope.”³⁰ Even though we do not get what we want, we still have hope because we anticipate a “more advanced set of hopes.”³¹ Because of this, we do not depend on the attainment of a particular hope as long as it makes sense for us to abandon that particular object of hope. In this stage, we can say that “we have become hopeful selves, and hopefulness has become intrinsic to who we are.”³²

Hope and Autonomy

One of Erikson’s main contributions is that he helps us to understand how hope continues to develop, especially in relation to the second stage—“autonomy vs. shame or doubt.” According to Erikson, “For the growth of autonomy a firmly developed early trust is necessary. The infant must have come to be sure that his [*sic*] faith in himself [*sic*] and in the world will not be jeopardized by the . . . wish to have his [*sic*] choice.”³³ This self-trust is the basis for the development of autonomy in early childhood. With the growth of self-trust, autonomy develops as a way of exercising self-control over her willfulness.³⁴

³⁰ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 32-33.

³¹ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 117.

³² Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 33.

³³ Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycles*, 110.

³⁴ Erikson’s view on “autonomy” has been criticized by Carol Gilligan and other feminist thinkers. In her book, *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan claims that the Eriksonian term *autonomy* reflects more male characteristics than female. By favoring “separation” over “relationship,” Gilligan argues, Erikson’s theory is inclined to gender-bias. Though Gilligan’s claim is valid in many ways, as Capps points out, Erikson’s view on autonomy is far more concerned with “agency”—the capacity to make choices—than with separation of self from the mothering person, and thus lessen this criticism. Though there might be differences between girls and boys in terms of the degree to which they use agency, both girls and boys need to maintain personal autonomy to be able to make choices among other opportunities. Thus, I will continue to consider autonomy as an important aspect of human development. See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982); Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 48-51. In a cultural perspective, it has been commonly known that

Erikson sees autonomy as an important component of hope. In the second or early childhood stage, hope takes on a new dimension. As she grows, the infant begins to take independent actions, which often are different from the desires of the maternal person. Through this process, the infant learns that a chastened will is more effective than a will that is out of control. In this milieu, a sense of autonomy emerges. The infant discovers the value of compromising and forging certain desires to attain better or more desirable outcomes. In this way, hope is aligned with the development of personal autonomy, with the child's capacity to make decisions for herself. Consequently, hope is closely related to personal agency with which the child practices autonomy actively in the world, exercising personal choices.³⁵

In terms of the relationship between hope and autonomy, it is important to note that "without autonomy, the capacity to make choices for ourselves as well as to act on our desires, hope is often reduced to wishing."³⁶ Wishing is often not oriented to reality. In contrast, autonomy provides a realistic and feasible assessment in our pursuit of hoping. Thus, with the assistance of autonomy, hope becomes more genuine and attainable. In addition, when we develop an "attitude of hopefulness" independent of our

Asian culture, including Korean culture, partly influenced by the Confucian ideal, tends to prefer collective belongingness (such as family, community, and nation) and interdependence over individual independence which might be similar to personal autonomy. It is still true that many Koreans value their collectiveness and communal spirit of togetherness, but they are learning the benefit of being independent and autonomous. For instance, some Koreans, if not all, have started teaching their children to make their own decisions, allowing them to choose toys, books, and even their future career independently. This is especially true for the Korean Americans who learn the importance of independence while living in the U.S. Thus, autonomy and independence need to be considered as important aspects of the Korean American experience, along with interdependence, togetherness, and relationship.

³⁵ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 47-48.

³⁶ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 51.

specific hopes, hope becomes a “formidable human strength” that helps us to maintain a “spirit of hopefulness” throughout our lives.³⁷

Hope as an Enduring Strength

One of the fundamental questions concerning our discussion of hope from a developmental perspective is how the hopeful self can be maintained against the obstacles and challenges that we confront in our lives. First of all, Erikson argues that hope is an *enduring belief* that sustains life: “Hope is the enduring belief in the attainability of fervent wishes, in spite of the dark urges and rages which mark the beginning of existence.”³⁸ Secure early attachments, a trustworthy environment, and a strong bond, which are mainly earned from her primary caregiver, contribute to a child's capacity to maintain an enduring spirit of hope. On the one hand, Erikson does not see hope as a short-lived entity; it is rather an “enduring belief” that does not easily disappear as we move beyond the life stage where this virtue emerged. Hope continues to influence human development throughout life. On the other hand, Erikson emphasizes that hope endures “in spite of the dark urges and rages which mark the beginning of existence.” This indicates that hope is constantly threatened by other perceptions and emotions. In this way, hope coexists with challenges in our lives through its enduring spirit, and, paradoxically, it helps us to develop enduring life attitudes. Without these “dark urges and rages,” Erikson argues, our hope would simply lead to a “maladaptive optimism,” which can be described as “[a]n exclusive condition of hopefulness, translated into

³⁷ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 33.

³⁸ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 118.

various imaginable worlds . . . a paradise in nature, a Utopia in social reality, and a heaven in the beyond.”³⁹

A Cognitive View of the Development of Hope

In the previous section, we have explored how cognitive theory explains the origin of hope: hope is “born” during the first two to three years of life through cultivating goal-directed thinking, with the creation of possible routes and the motivation to move along those routes to reach desired goals. Snyder’s cognitive hope theory basically adopts a developmental view, in that he believes hope develops throughout later childhood, such as the preschool, the middle, the adolescent years.⁴⁰ A cognitive view argues that each developmental period provides opportunities to strengthen the earlier gains in hopeful thinking. Over time, most children learn to think about themselves and their goal attainments in a more “refined and complex manner.”⁴¹

One thing that we need to emphasize is that hope can be lost when people meet obstacles, impediments, and barriers in their lives. Snyder provides a model of “psychological stages” that explains the process of losing hope when goal-directed thinking is severely impeded: the progress from hope to rage, from rage to despair, and from despair to apathy.⁴² When our important goals are blocked, we often experience rage, which is often the first reaction of disappointment. Rage is a type of emotional

³⁹ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 118. See also Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 30.

⁴⁰ For a detailed discussion of the development of hopeful thinking across later childhood, see Snyder, “Genesis: The Birth and Growth of Hope,” 31-36.

⁴¹ Snyder, “Genesis: The Birth and Growth of Hope,” 31.

⁴² Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 41-42. See also Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 116-20.

reaction leading us to “commit misguided, impulsive, and self-defeating acts.”⁴³

However, we may still be able to maintain energy and motivation to pursue alternative goals while enraged.⁴⁴ If the blockages remain strong and continue despite pathways thinking and agentic thinking, we may fall into despair about the previously desired goals. Despair involves in surrender to the perceived blockage to our important goals. Despair is related to a “depression-related state of immobilization” and reflects the feeling of an “overwhelming sense of futility about overcoming the related obstacle (or obstacles).”⁴⁵ People may become apathetic and cease all goal pursuits. While people who are in despair still think about their goal, apathetic persons no longer care. As a “vegetative, uncaring state,” apathy deprives people of a sense of joy, interest, and happiness.⁴⁶ This progress through the stages from hope to apathy may not be applicable to all people, and not everybody follows exactly the pathway Snyder describes. Nonetheless, Snyder’s argument explains the “hypothesized progression” through which people might go when their hopes are blocked.⁴⁷

⁴³ Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 41.

⁴⁴ Snyder suggests that “higher-hope” people may experience the sense of anger and rage at goal blockage less frequently than “low-hope” persons, because they have effective thinking patterns during such situations, attempting to find alternative pathways or different goals. High-hopers may also have the motivation and capacity to resolve the impediments they are experiencing. However, high-hope people are also affected by the ravages of goal blockages. The progress from rage to despair and apathy, according to Snyder, is deeply related to the level of dispositional hope and the nature of the goal blockage. See Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 43; Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 117-18.

⁴⁵ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 118; Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 41-42. Snyder explains the difference between rage and despair: “Rage is an active, outward expression of goal blockage; despair is a passive, inward expression about the possible insurmountable nature of that blockage.” See Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 119.

⁴⁶ Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 42. Snyder suggests that the stage of apathy is very similar to the symptoms of major depressive episodes. See Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 119-20.

⁴⁷ It is interesting that Snyder’s model resonates with pastoral theologian Donald Capps’ “major threats to hope,” which include despair, apathy, and shame. Capps argues that despair is related to the

Cognitive theory attempts to explain what triggers the loss of hope. According to Snyder, a supportive environment, a secure attachment to their caregivers, and physical and emotional support are necessary to initiate the development of hopefulness in childhood. In addition, neglect, abuse, premature death of a caregiver, or poor parenting skills may bring the demise of hope in childhood, in that these environments do not provide consistent rules, visible cause, and effective relationships; therefore, children may become less confident in achieving goals and in their ability to learn skills to reach goals.⁴⁸ Snyder's cognitive hope theory also describes what factors contribute to the defeat of hope in the adult life. Traumatic adult life events, such as abuse (physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual), job loss, burnout, loss of loved ones, disability, chronic pain, and illness may impact adults' negative perceptions of hope. Snyder also discusses the influence of social-cultural factors, such as discrimination, prejudice, and various "isms" (racism, sexism, etc.). These factors might not destroy hopeful thinking in the lives of people who are affected by them (immigrants, people of color, women, etc.), but the societal forces can damage and undermine such thinking, consciously and/or unconsciously.⁴⁹

"closing of the personal future," without considering alternative plans of action. Apathy, the "state of desirelessness," involves the idea that the future is already determined. Shame occurs with misguided and failed hopes. According to Capps, despair, apathy, and shame undermine hope and distort our perception of time. See Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 98-136.

⁴⁸ Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, "The Demise of Hope," 45.

⁴⁹ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 145-48.

Cultural Influences on the Development of Hope

There is strong support for the view that hope is influenced by its sociocultural context.⁵⁰ Erikson emphasizes the importance of cultural influences on the development of hope, noting that at every stage in the human life cycle, there is an interdependent relationship between individual human needs and particular cultural institutions. Even though favorable early family experiences can impart to a child a sense of hope, Erikson maintains, cultural institutions further reinforce—or undermine—trust and hope. When Erikson claims that the etiology of hope is in the infant-mother relationship, he sees this relationship as part of a social experience.⁵¹ Sociocultural environment influences the way in which mothers, children, and other people understand and perceive hope.⁵²

It is unfortunate that little intercultural research on the meanings of hope has been done in the field of psychology, but there is a growing awareness of the necessity of this type of research. One cross-cultural research project that is particularly important for our inquiry is a study done by Averill, Catlin, and Chon in 1990.⁵³ The researchers attempted to compare the meaning and conceptualization of hoping in different cultures, especially in the U.S. and Korea. They conducted a quantitative study in which the subjects were requested to fill out a questionnaire on the experience of hope. Both in the U.S. and in Korea, 100 college students participated in this study. The results of the research clearly show remarkable differences in conceptualizations of hope in the two groups. According

⁵⁰ See, e.g., Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*; Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*. For an important study of the influence of social environment on human knowledge, see Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966).

⁵¹ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 116.

⁵² See Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 16-17.

⁵³ See “Study 4: Cross-Cultural Variations,” in Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*, 71-89.

to Averill, Catlin, and Chon, Korean subjects conceived of hope (*Himang*) as controllable, voluntary, intellectual, and permanent, a part of one's personality, a way of coping, and a socially acquired motive. Korean language synonyms for hope indicate the characteristics of the Korean way of understanding hope, as expressed in such terms as ideal (*Isang*), ambition (*P'obu*), and effort (*Noryok*), along with wish (*Paraem*; *Somang*), dream (*Kkum*), expectation (*Kidae*), and desire (*Yongmang*). U.S. subjects linked hope to faith, a reliance on God's will and individual effort, a more transitory state—a way of coping, an emotion, and an attitude. English language synonyms for hope used by the U.S. students included such terms as faith, prayer, and belief, along with wish, desire, want, and optimism.⁵⁴

Concluding that the meaning of hope differs for these Korean and U.S. students, Averill, Catlin, and Chon attributed these differences to different religious and intellectual systems, with U.S. respondents being guided by a Judeo-Christian approach and Koreans following a Confucian intellectual tradition.⁵⁵ The researchers argued that the U.S. college students, including those who profess no religion, have been strongly influenced by the Judeo-Christian religious tradition; thereby their concepts of hope are closely linked to faith, a reliance on God's will, as well as to individual effort. For them, hope is a transitory emotional state, an attitude, and a way of coping. In contrast, Korean understanding of hope is heavily influenced by the intellectual ideology of Confucianism, which emphasizes the cultivation of the ideal person and society, in harmony with one's

⁵⁴ Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*, 74-77, 85-86.

⁵⁵ Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*, 85-89.

self, with others, and with nature.⁵⁶ Thus, Korean concepts of hope are characterized by a socially acquired but relatively permanent part of personality, closely related to the intellect and will. Koreans tend to adopt a more moralistic outlook when deciding whether it is appropriate to hope, and hope is viewed as an integral aspect of one's own personality. From this research we learn that hope cannot be understood adequately apart from the sociocultural context of which it is a part.

Although Averill et al. provide an important aspect of the conceptualizations of hope in its cultural perspective, my research on hope in Korean American experience is also vital input to intercultural and religious meanings of hoping. This input is partly because the participants in my research are Korean Americans who have Christian beliefs as well as Korean identity, which means that they are influenced by both the Judeo-Christian religious tradition and a Confucian mindset. It would be interesting to observe how culture, religion, and life are intertwined in its expressions of hope. Because we used different research methods, quantitative and qualitative respectively, it would be impossible to compare the results exactly. But it seems clear that both religion and culture influence the way my research participants understand hope. First of all, their understanding of hope embraces the Christian perspective: they view hope as a personal relationship with God, faith, and a reliance on God's will. Religion is a profound influence on their perception of hope. My interviewees show, however, that they still maintain Korean cultural aspects of hope in that they understand hope as volitional,

⁵⁶ Averill, Catlin, and Chon admit that other influences, such as Buddhism and Taoism, might be factors in Korean cultures, but they argue that Confucianism is the strongest among these. They also note that all these Eastern religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, and Confucianism) share a common ground in which self-transcendence, self-exertion, and striving for inner enlightenment are highlighted, which is contrasted with the Western religions, such as Christianity, in which the emphasis is on faith in a deity and its transcendental and ultimately benevolent power. See note 7 in Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*, 86.

cognitive, and a personality character. This reveals that culture and religion are profound influences on their conceptualizations of hope. Their understanding of hope reflects both their Korean cultural heritage and Christian religious belief. If we admit that religion is an expression of culture, our assertion that sociocultural environment influences the way an individual and a community perceives hope is strengthened. Thus, we can conclude that hope needs to be understood as an expression of social, cultural, and religious particularity.

The Nature of Hope

How can hope be described in psychosocial perspective? In what ways does hope differ from other similar concepts, such as optimism, wishing, and desire? How does the process of hoping proceed? What is the relationship between hope and religion and/or spirituality? In this section, I discuss a philosophical and psychological conceptualization of “hoping,” especially focusing on the poignant descriptions of French existential philosopher Gabriel Marcel and U.S. psychologist Paul W. Pruyser. The differences between hoping and other seemingly parallel concepts, such as “wishing,” “desire,” and “optimism” are to be examined in order to understand hope more accurately. Other theorists, such as Canadian psychoanalyst W. C. M. Scott, are also introduced. In addition, I explore how hope is connected to coping mechanisms and the way in which imagination enhances our capacity to hope.

Through this section, I argue that hope is not a wishful thought, unrealistic imagination, or naïve optimism; it is rather a reality-based entity which leads people into a new possibility for the future. Furthermore, I show that hopefulness is not something fixed, but part of the overflowing dynamics of our human existence. It will be clear from

this section that a hopeful attitude develops, ironically, from our experience of suffering, hurt, and calamity, which is deeply related to our sociocultural environment. Because of its paradoxical nature, hopefulness often requires us to be involved in waiting, patience, perseverance, modesty, and humility.

Hope and Related Concepts

Pruyser addressed the topic of hope in several of his books and articles.⁵⁷ In 1963, a year before Erikson published his essay on the basic human strengths, Pruyser produced his first article on hope. When writing about hope, Pruyser often cited Marcel's insights on hope.⁵⁸ According to Pruyser, when Marcel addresses hope, he prefers the verb "hoping" over the noun "hope," because hoping can be better understood as a "process, a psychic activity of persons" and a "real, live occurrence in a concrete and knowable setting," rather than a static idea.⁵⁹ Marcel argues that there is a certain condition in which hope evolves. When everything goes absolutely well, there is no need, no reason, and no ground for hoping. Where there is a calamity, for example, such as terminal illness, however, the picture of hope emerges. In a sense, Pruyser points out, hoping is a "response to felt tragedy" and the "positive outgrowth of a tragic sense of life."⁶⁰ Thus,

⁵⁷ Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," 86-96; Paul W. Pruyser, *Between Belief and Unbelief* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974); Pruyser, *The Play of the Imagination*; Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity," 120-31.

⁵⁸ Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*, trans. Emma Craufurd (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), originally published in 1944 in French.

⁵⁹ Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity," 121. See also Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," 87.

⁶⁰ Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity," 122.

to be hopeful, one should first have some “sense of captivity, of being caught by the limitations and sorrows of the human condition, in firsthand experience.”⁶¹

Marcel and Pruyser have endeavored to differentiate hoping from such seemingly indistinguishable concepts as *wishing*, *desire*, and *optimism*. According to Marcel, hoping is different from *wishing* in its “global” nature. While our wishes and dreams often tend to focus on specific objects or desirable things, hoping is focused on “global or existential conditions,” such as liberation, deliverance, healing, and blessing.⁶² Unlike wishing, which is inexhaustible in pursuing more goods and desires, hoping transcends beyond egocentric wishes, being flexible and free. Furthermore, in a phenomenological sense, Pruyser argues, hoping is deeply related to “patience” and “forbearance,” which often involve “waiting, though with an added quality of awaiting.”⁶³ In contrast, wishing is connected with “urges toward tension discharge,” because it seeks “immediate satisfaction,” without realizing that there are “possibilities for delay and postponement.”⁶⁴

Pruyser argues that, overall, the psychological literature does not clearly differentiate hoping from wishing, tending to lump hoping, wishing, anticipating, yearning, wanting, aspiring, craving, and other terms under the rubric of desiring. “Desire” is assumed to be a “master motive,” operating in different guises.⁶⁵ Thus, according to Pruyser, Marcel adds one other crucial element that distinguishes hoping

⁶¹ Pruyser, “Maintaining Hope in Adversity,” 122.

⁶² Pruyser, “Maintaining Hope in Adversity,” 121.

⁶³ Pruyser, “Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping,” 89. Donald Capps has argued that there are three allies of hope, which include *trust*, *patience*, and *modesty*. *Patience* is concerned with steadiness, endurance, or perseverance in keeping hope alive, and inspires us proactively to engage in challenges and tasks. See Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 137-62.

⁶⁴ Pruyser, “Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping,” 89.

⁶⁵ Pruyser, “Maintaining Hope in Adversity,” 121.

from wishing, which is the degree of self-absorption. While wishing usually involves “states of strong desire” with a passion for satisfaction, in hoping the ego is less strongly “cathected” and the hoper is in a “state of responsiveness” with a “degree of humility.”⁶⁶ Thus, these characteristics—its global nature, patient attitude, and less self-absorption and humility—make hoping distinctive, differentiated from wishing or wishful imagination. It is important to have an ability to discern the differences between these two, in order to understand hoping accurately.

Hoping is also differentiated from *optimism* in a significant way. According to Marcel, optimism is not based on reality, minimizing or attenuating the obstacles that people need to realize.⁶⁷ Optimism is often related to external things and circumstances, “outside the intimacy of the self.”⁶⁸ Thus, those who tend to be optimistic, as well as their counterparts—those who tend to be pessimistic, draw attention to the importance of “I” with distance and distinctness from others. They are aggressive in asserting that their views are correct, without listening to others’ perspectives; their attitudes and opinions tend to be rigid, with less flexibility and openness to change. (It is important to note that these characteristics are not necessarily attributable to personality or choice, since persons suffering from depression or bipolar disorder may demonstrate these characteristics.) People who are able to hope, in contrast to the optimist and the pessimist, “remain part of the scheme of things,” not trying to be distant from reality and from

⁶⁶ Pruyser, “Maintaining Hope in Adversity,” 121.

⁶⁷ Pruyser, “Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping,” 89; Pruyser, “Maintaining Hope in Adversity,” 122.

⁶⁸ Pruyser, “Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping,” 89.

others.⁶⁹ They attempt to see themselves within the wider reality that transcends them. They also tend not to be boastful or place themselves above others. Their attitude is similar to “humility before the nature of reality,” and to “modesty, both toward other people and toward the vast power and often unfathomable design of reality.”⁷⁰ Thus Marcel argues that there is an aspect of chastity in hoping.⁷¹ Unlike people who have unrealistic optimistic attitudes, the hopeful person does not predict that something will be happening, nor claim that something must happen. People who hope believe that these predictions and claims are beyond their control, and they accept their limitations. Therefore, if something they hoped for does not occur, they do not have an urge to “take revenge,” though there might be some disappointment.⁷²

Thus, according to Marcel and Pruyser, hope involves a tragic sense of life, an undistorted view of reality, an attitude of humility, a feeling of commonality, and a capacity to denounce unrealistic and impulsive wishing. Because people tend to cling to brash and unworkable wishing, and culture often incites them to pursue the fulfillment of these wishes, to maintain true hope is not easy and requires our discernments and sincere efforts. How then is the attitude of hoping manifested in our lives? The next section discusses the process of hoping, using the experience of an infant.

⁶⁹ Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," 89.

⁷⁰ Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity," 122.

⁷¹ Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," 89.

⁷² Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," 89.

The Process of Hoping

The Canadian psychoanalyst Scott's reflections on hoping are helpful for understanding hope's dynamics and processes.⁷³ Through his observations of infants' feeding situation and the emerging object relations of infants, Pruyser notes, Scott proposes the idea that hope develops through a dynamic, developmental sequence, which includes *waiting*, *anticipating*, *pinning*, and *hoping*.⁷⁴ Even though Scott uses the generic term "wishing" to refer to all of these steps, Pruyser sees that wishing is primarily manifested in the earlier phases of the sequences, and differentiates hoping, which is based on reality, from wishing, which is not.

Scott believes that each step has its own characteristics and effect that distinguish it from the others. An infant, who remembers a pleasing image of the gratifying object, usually her mother, and the satisfying qualities of food, *waits* for this pleasing image to be realized as actual sensations. Infants are often forced to do a bit of waiting, and with repeated experiences of waiting that is gratified, they learn to *anticipate* the satisfaction to be obtained. In this step, infants are able to experience the absent object of their desire in a more intuitive way because their senses become involved. They often "feel" the presence of the other and may even "feel" the other's embrace. Thus, anticipation involves much stronger and proactive attitude than waiting. Then, recollecting what they are missing as a result of the other's absence, infants *pine* for the satisfactions that the maternal person is able to provide. Often, anticipation and pinning alternate with one another. But in pinning, infants have an overwhelming sense of the absence of the missing

⁷³ W. C. M. Scott, "Depression, Confusion and Multivalence," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 41 (1960): 497-503.

⁷⁴ Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," 89-90. See also Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity," 123.

object so that even when the missing one appears to them, it takes time to end their pining. Eventually, the infant comes to *hope*, gaining the “ability to accept peacefully some inevitable waiting, in the firm belief that the mother herself has a need to give to her child what she can and is benevolently disposed toward him.”⁷⁵ Thus, hope involves the “belief that an object is forthcoming which has itself the desire to satisfy the hoper.”⁷⁶ In Scott’s view, hoping is generated out of prior drive processes via waiting, anticipating and pining, and thus involves a rather complicated process of emotional relationship between people in which mutual desires for satisfaction occur.

Because hope is a belief which recognizes its reciprocal nature, Pruyser suggests that hoping is reality-oriented: “his [Scott’s] paradigmatic progression moves from primitive wishful thought in terms of hallucinated content to the beginnings of reality-oriented thinking and interpersonal attitudes.”⁷⁷ Hoping is the step in the process that takes the reality of the situation into account. Waiting and anticipating are not under the constraints of reality, as these steps focus on images and sensations in place of the other’s presence. Pining is more reality-oriented in that one is profoundly aware of being bereft of the other’s presence. Because it differs in this respect from waiting and anticipating, Pruyser proposes that pining, along with hoping, are the “hoping” sequences in the process, while waiting and anticipating are based on “wishing.” Still, pining does not include the belief that the other is forthcoming, nor does it provide grounds for the belief that self and other have reciprocal desires. Hope alone is based on confidence that the

⁷⁵ Pruyser, “Maintaining Hope in Adversity,” 123.

⁷⁶ Pruyser, “Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping,” 89.

⁷⁷ Pruyser, “Maintaining Hope in Adversity,” 123.

desired one will appear, precisely because she is believed to desire this herself and is also believed to be able to act on this desire of hers.

Hoping and Spirituality

In the understanding of hope and hoping, Pruyser utilizes Scott's model but, as Capps notes, he goes beyond Scott in applying the scheme to religion.⁷⁸ In *Between Belief and Unbelief*, Pruyser points out that the infant has "vested his hope not in food or taste or smell or the sound of his mother's steps, as she walks to him, and certainly not in hallucinations of all these, but in the mother herself as the good object who desires the infant as much as he desires her."⁷⁹ From this observation, Pruyser infers that "hoping requires trust in benevolence as an actual trait of another human being or as a quality of the universe."⁸⁰ In a later article about hope, Pruyser articulates a similar notion when he generalizes from the mother-child relationship and states that Scott's model "implies that hoping is based on a belief that there is *some benevolent disposition toward oneself somewhere in the universe, conveyed by a caring person.*"⁸¹ Erikson also, Capps notes, has made the similar point in his writings, as he sees the mother-child relationship as paradigmatic of the self's relationship to the universe. For instance, Capps comments that Erikson refers to the views of mystics regarding the mutuality of the individual self and a responsive universe, noting Meister Eckhart's exclamation that "the eye with

⁷⁸ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 36-37.

⁷⁹ Pruyser, *Between Belief and Unbelief*, 185. Capps discusses Pruyser's extension of Scott in his *Agents of Hope*, 36.

⁸⁰ Pruyser, *Between Belief and Unbelief*, 185. Cited in Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 36.

⁸¹ Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity," 123-24. [Emphasis in original.]

which we see God is the same as the eye with which God sees us.”⁸² In this sense, hoping takes on spiritual and even religious connotations, as Pruyser maintains, “this impression can mask the person’s more stunning *discovery that the creator and the created, or the universe and the solitary person, are interdependent and engaged in patterns of mutuality.*”⁸³

Scott’s psychoanalytic and developmental step, as Pruyser notes, appears to be parallel to Marcel’s idea about the role of time in hoping. The hoper has a future oriented attitude, seeing reality as a process of unfolding, and is therefore essentially open-minded. This nature of open-mindedness makes people peaceful in their waiting, and the hoper’s calmness and patience differentiate hoping from wishing, which is marked by an impatient and restless mode. Furthermore, as a person who hopes is reality-based and future oriented, the process of hoping is to be “seen as resourceful, and possibly as novelty producing.”⁸⁴

Hope as a Coping Mechanism

One of the contributions of psychosocial literature on hope is that it addresses the important aspect of hope having to do with its relation to *coping*. Medical and psychological literature reveal that hope and coping are inexplicably intertwined.⁸⁵ Counseling psychologist Ronna Fay Jevne, after carefully listening to the stories cancer patients express, has concluded that persons who cope but hope little are flat, while

⁸² Erik H. Erikson, “The Galilean Sayings and the Sense of ‘I’,” *The Yale Review* 70 (1981): 361. Cited in Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 37. No reference for the quotation from Meister Eckhart is given.

⁸³ Pruyser, “Maintaining Hope in Adversity,” 124. [Emphasis in original.]

⁸⁴ Pruyser, “Maintaining Hope in Adversity,” 124.

⁸⁵ See Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*; Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*; Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*; Jaklin Elliott, ed., *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hope* (New York: Nova Science, 2005).

people who hope but cope poorly lack the ability to transform hope into action.⁸⁶ Jevne goes on to claim that the hopeful person is characterized by action-orientedness, such as planning, organizing, making decisions, and seeking help, and these actions are dependent on the ability to “imagine” what possible efforts are available.⁸⁷ Psychologists Averill, Catlin, and Chon talk about hope’s motivational and life-sustaining qualities. According to them, “Hope nourishes, guides, uplifts, and supports a person in times of difficulties” and the hopeful attitude has beneficial effects on recovery from illness, immune functioning, and other medical challenges people encounter.⁸⁸ Averill, Catlin, and Chon also mention, similar to Jevne’s claim, that the person who gains hope is committed to action, if action is possible, such as seeking and following medical advice, eliciting social support, and adopting a vigilant orientation, all of which help the person to enhance the chances of successful coping.⁸⁹ In addition, they assert that, even in the situation where no specific action is feasible, hope may still impact a person’s life as a regulatory principle, providing a “sense of coherence” to experience.⁹⁰ Thus, hope functions positively in the presence of illness, suffering, and predicament, and promotes a person’s physical, psychological, and spiritual health and quality of life.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Ronna Fay Jevne, *It All Begins with Hope: Patients, Caregivers & the Bereaved Speak Out* (San Diego: LuraMedia, 1991), 152.

⁸⁷ Jevne, *It All Begins with Hope*, 152.

⁸⁸ Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*, 100-01.

⁸⁹ Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*, 101.

⁹⁰ Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*, 101-02.

⁹¹ Health care professionals Farran, Herth, and Popovich have attempted to compare “hope” with “hopelessness” in its impact on body, mind, and spirit. Their assertion is that while hope functions as a protective mechanism, hopelessness on a long-term basis may hinder a person’s physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. See Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 39.

Snyder has suggested that what he calls “higher-hope people” (people who keep their goals clearly in mind and constantly are thinking about ways to obtain them) have better coping abilities than “low-hope” persons. According to his “hope theory,” high-hopers are people who are good at generating “goal thoughts” and creating effective “pathways” leading to goal attainment, and at maintaining “agency thoughts” to provide enough motivation for the goal pursuit.⁹² One of the important characteristics of high-hopers is the ability to handle barriers that arise in their attempts to attain goals. While low-hope individuals are susceptible to yield to various obstacles, high-hopers are flexible, creative, and resilient in their encounters with barriers so that they keep an “energetic self-referential attitude and spirit (i.e., agency thinking), along with the perceived ability to find an alternative course when blocked (i.e., pathways thinking).”⁹³

Hope, in combination with adaptive coping strategies, can lead to expanded functioning, in which the person feels more positive, his or her expressed thoughts and behaviors are more adaptive, and his or her relationships with others and the world culminate in a greater aliveness. In contrast, the lack of hope and adaptive coping capacities may trigger a more confined result of despair or hopelessness in one’s life.⁹⁴

Hope and Imagination

Hope is often related to the ability to *imagine* the possibilities in the future and imagination is a great companion of the hopeful self.⁹⁵ This is partly because the capability to hope depends on the gift to imagine. Imagination—the human ability to

⁹² See Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*; Snyder, ed., *Handbook of Hope*.

⁹³ Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 40.

⁹⁴ Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 19.

⁹⁵ See Lynch, *Images of Hope*; Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 90-94; Herbert, *Living Hope*, 33-36.

generate mental representations of objects, persons, or physical and social realities not immediately related to the senses—is among the most fascinating areas of inquiry throughout human history and has been an important subject not only for psychological study, but also for other disciplines, such as philosophy, theology, and literature.⁹⁶ Since it is not our concern here to describe a full history of the study of imagination, we will limit our inquiry to the exploration of the imagination in psychological study and the way in which imagination is related to hope.

In the field of psychology, understanding of imagination has had a mixed history. A pioneer in the field of psychology in the U.S., William James saw imagination positively, calling special attention to the broader role of imagination as an adaptive function well beyond the reproduction of recently presented stimuli.⁹⁷ The emergence of behaviorism around 1910, which emphasized more narrowly defined research methods and content in psychology to observable actions, however, led to a pause in the study of imagination for almost fifty years. Interest in the phenomenon of imagination was maintained primarily through the influence of psychoanalysis and Freud's emphasis on dream interpretation, creativity, and daydreaming, and his clinical use of naturally

⁹⁶ See Jerome L. Singer, "Imagination," in *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, ed. Alan E. Kazdin (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association; Oxford University Press, 2000), 4:227-30. Singer traces the human awareness of the phenomenon of imagination to the earliest written material of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics and the Sumerian cuneiform tablets, which describe and categorize dreams, and to the writings of the Hebrew Bible and the Greek epics. Singer also states that imaginative phenomena were an important concern in the works of Plato, Aristotle, and Chinese philosophers, and that quasi-scientific treatments of imagination were developed by the 17th and 18th century Enlightenment European writers, such as Hobbes, Leibniz, and Locke. Although many modern writers were suspicious of the functions of imagination, the Romantic poets of the 19th century, including Goethe and Schiller in Germany and Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats, and Shelley in England, claimed that imaginative processes were beneficial not only for human living but also for creative works.

⁹⁷ Singer, "Imagination," 4:228. See William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, authorized, unabridged ed. (New York: Dover, 1950), originally published in 1890.

occurring fantasy processes.⁹⁸ A major shift in psychology, which led to an acceptance and acceleration of studies of imagination, is dated to about 1960 and the “cognitive revolution,” in which interest in internally-generated, fluid thought processes is heightened through studies of sensory deprivation, research on daydreaming and night dreaming with laboratory methods, and new efforts at stimulating natural thought by computers.⁹⁹

One important development in the study of imagination is the awareness that human beings engage in two broad classes of thought, a distinction that provides a foundation for understanding and studying imagination. Two notable current researchers are Jerome Bruner and Seymour Epstein. Bruner introduced the important distinction between paradigmatic and narrative thought and how they function differently in generating imagination. According to Bruner, all human thought takes place in two dimensions, the paradigmatic mode, which follows logical, quasi-mathematical or orderly processes, and the narrative mode, represented by imaginary thought or language, such as possibilities, fantasies, and dreams.¹⁰⁰ In a similar vein, Epstein proposed a dual theory of thought and related research with the experiential system playing a special role in imagination.¹⁰¹ Epstein distinguished between logical and sequential thought of the type needed for scientific or economic reasoning and the cognitive experiential form of

⁹⁸ Singer, "Imagination," 4:228.

⁹⁹ Singer, "Imagination," 4:228.

¹⁰⁰ Jerome S. Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986).

¹⁰¹ Seymour Epstein, "Cognitive-Experiential Self-Theory: The Dual Process Personality Theory with Implications for Diagnosis and Psychotherapy," in *Empirical Perspectives on the Psychoanalytic Unconscious*, ed. Robert Bornstein and Joseph Masling (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1998), 99-140.

thought that is reflected in emotional reenactments of past or possible future events. Both forms of thought can be adaptive and self-enhancing, and it can be shown that often even important scientific achievements require combination of the two styles of mental experience.

Lynch provides an existential analysis of hope in its relation to imagination. In Lynch's view, one cannot fully understand hope without focusing on the imaginative process. Defining hope as "a sense of the possible," the power to transcend the endless forms of impossibility, suffering, and darkness, Lynch sees imagination as a necessary ingredient of the hoping process. He describes imagination as "the gift that envisions what cannot yet be seen, the gift that constantly proposes to itself that the boundaries of the possible are wider than they seem."¹⁰² The imaginative ability enables people to overcome the immediate situation, envisioning beyond what may appear on the surface to be hopeless circumstances.

Imagination, if it is in prison and has tried every exit, does not panic or move into apathy but sits down to try to envision another way out. It is always slow to admit that all the facts are in, that all the doors have been tried, and that it is defeated. It is not so much that it has vision as that it is able to wait, to wait for a moment of vision which is not yet there, for a door that is not yet locked. It is not overcome by the absoluteness of the present moment.¹⁰³

It is worth noting that, unlike Marcel and Pruyser, Lynch's notion of wishing—the human capacity to pursue what is desirable in life—is foundational in his understanding of hope as imagination.¹⁰⁴ Wishing can be a source of true hope as long as it is not pathological in nature and is instead grounded in affirmation and acceptance. Yet

¹⁰² Lynch, *Images of Hope*, 24, 27. Though published in 1966, Lynch's work is still significant for understanding hope.

¹⁰³ Lynch, *Images of Hope*, 27.

¹⁰⁴ See Herbert, *Living Hope*, 34.

hope also relies on reality as much as on the imaginative capacity. Lynch does not see imagination as a mysterious or esoteric concept, but as a *creative* quality that is rooted in reality. For Lynch, imagination functions in such a way as to be mindful of the limitations of what is possible.¹⁰⁵ Thus, Lynch emphasizes the “realistic and human imagination,” which “lies into fact and existence” and supposes that “there is a fact and a possibility that is not yet in.”¹⁰⁶ Compared to fantasy, which represents the rigid, inflexible wishing for absolutes in a way that seals itself off from reality, hope creatively imagines genuine possibilities.

Pastoral theologian and counselor Andrew Lester also highlights the importance of imagination in his conceptualization of hope. According to Lester, “Hope is constantly imagining the unseen future and refuses to stop imagining, regardless of the situation.”¹⁰⁷ Imagination undergirds hope by continuously hypothesizing a way out, constructing new perspectives, and seeking a wider awareness of life and thought. Through the imagination, hope can see a possibility for the future, conceptualize that possibility, and form it into a vision. Furthermore, agreeing with Lynch, Lester maintains that “because hope is realistic in its orientation, creative imagination is not out of touch with the present possibilities when considering future options.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, for Lester, one of the important tasks of the caregiver is to help people seeking care to open up their future by developing their imagination.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ See Lynch, *Images of Hope*, 161-208.

¹⁰⁶ Lynch, *Images of Hope*, 209.

¹⁰⁷ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 90.

¹⁰⁸ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 91.

¹⁰⁹ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 93-94.

Hope and imagination are deeply intertwined, each affecting the quality of the other. While hopelessness often involves a constriction of the imagination or a thwarted imagination that leads one to despair, true hope lives with a creative imagination characterized by the sense of possibility and realistic awareness. Hope imagines the possibilities in the future, refuses to stop imagining, and is always imagining what is not yet seen, a way out of difficulty, or a wider perspective for life.

Toward a Psychosocial Understanding of Hope

Depth psychology, developmental psychology, nursing sciences, and clinical psychology describe hope as a basic human strength influenced by intrapersonal, interpersonal, environmental and sociological experiences, and current situational determinants. Hope is shaped within an individual, between individuals, and among individuals in a community or a society. From an intrapsychic perspective, hope emerges during infancy through maternal or parental relationships in which an individual learns to hope or to despair (“trust versus basic mistrust”). In later developmental stages, other relationships, such as peer groups, social activities, etc., contribute to the development and maintenance of hopefulness. Life experiences and worldviews also influence the way one perceives, tests, augments, and keeps nuancing one's understanding of hope. In addition, a larger environmental or sociocultural perspective provides the basis for an individual to have hope.

As seen above, psychological theories further elaborate on the issue of hope. First of all, hope is described as an enduring belief. It is not a fleeting and transitory attitude; rather it continues to influence the way we perceive ourselves and/or the world throughout life. Hope is also co-exists with challenges in our lives, which, paradoxically,

help us to develop enduring life attitudes. Hope often develops from the experience of suffering, hurt, and calamity and, because of its paradoxical nature, the attitude of modesty, humility, and patience is demanded. Hope does not exist in a vacuum and is often conditioned by its social and cultural environments. Sociocultural contexts influence the way in which a certain ethnic or cultural group perceives hope. It is also claimed that the hopeful attitude influences our body, mind, and soul positively. It is well documented that, as a protective mechanism, hope plays a major role in the maintenance of our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.¹¹⁰ Thus, hope and coping are interactively intertwined. Hope can be used as an adaptive coping strategy, promoting the expanded functioning of body, mind, and spirit, such as more positive feelings, more adaptive thoughts and behaviors, and more enhanced relationships. Furthermore, hope is described as an act of imagination through which an individual sees possibilities for the future, conceptualizes them, and forms them into a vision. In a sense, the capacity to hope depends on our ability to imagine the future, which is not yet realized but is attainable.

Having considered key psychosocial components and perspectives of the etiology, development, and nature of hope, I turn to an examination of hope as it is related to Christian theology.

¹¹⁰ Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 16-39, 190-91. See also Jevne, *It All Begins with Hope*, 153-54.

Chapter 4

Christian Theology and Hope: A Theological Reflection on Hope

And so, Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in you.

—Psalm 39:7 (NLT)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing; so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

—Romans 15:13 (NRSV)

To develop a Christian practical theology of hope, it is important to turn our eyes to the theological underpinnings of hope, because it leads us to understand hope from the perspective of Christianity. Christian theology has provided a rich description and interpretation of hope through various resources, such as biblical, historical, systematic, and philosophical theologies. The argument in this chapter is divided into four sections: (1) Narratives of Suffering and Hope in the Hebrew Bible; (2) New Testament and Hope; (3) Recent Theological Conceptualizations of Hope; (4) Toward a Theology of Hope.

I write this chapter with my theological perspective that embraces Korean evangelical Reformed Presbyterianism. In chapter 1, I explicated my theological location and method in detail. To reiterate, my theological position is located in the Reformed tradition, which highlights, among other beliefs, the sovereignty of God, the authority of Scripture as the Word of God, the revelation of God manifested in the Bible and particularly in Jesus Christ, and the salvific love of Jesus embodied in his death and resurrection. As a Korean evangelical, I emphasize eternal salvation through personal trust in Christ, a spiritually transformed life marked by moral conduct and personal devotion, and zeal for evangelism and missions, as important elements of evangelicalism.

Given the significance of the authority of Scripture, I use Scripture as the starting point and central asset for any theological work and, in this dissertation, for the exploration of Christian hope. Though other hope studies in the field of practical theology often include biblical passages, this work emphasizes engagement with selected passages of the Bible to seek the roots and foundations of hope. The reason is that, from my Reformed theological perspective, Christian theology needs to be biblical theology, as Moltmann mentions, in that “without biblical theology,” “theology cannot be Christian theology.”¹ Of course, I do not mean to imply that theology does not use other sources: Christian theology endeavors to engage in the dialogue with other disciplines, for instance, the social sciences, philosophy, and history. Rather, my emphasis is that biblical texts as the Christian canon should be a primary text that Christians consult in order to develop a theology of hope. Actually, as the book of hope, the Bible provides significant accounts of hope that need considerable attention, which will be our main focus in the following pages.² Thus, the reader is not expected to be surprised that half of this chapter discusses the themes and narratives of hope expressed in the Bible. It is also true that it is not possible, even not necessary, to cover the entire Scriptures, thus I have chosen selected pieces of the Bible narratives that I find significant for an understanding

¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, trans. and ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 7.

² My assertion that the Bible is the book of hope comes from my reading and understanding of the scriptures. Though the Bible consists of various themes, narratives, and genres, I see that hopeful stories and statements are among the most significant parts of the Bible. For instance, consider the healing narrative of Jesus and Paul’s statements on hope. In the following pages, I will explicate why the Bible is the book of hope. In this sense, my assertion resonates with Moltmann’s point in that he sees the Bible as the “book of God’s hope.” See Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 46. Jesuit scholar Gerald O’Collins also claims that “the Old Testament is a book of hope, recording a history of a people who hoped.” See Gerald O’Collins, *Man and His New Hopes* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 41.

of Christian hope. My purpose of using Scripture is to locate the foundation of Christian hope in the biblical narratives.

Given the role of Scripture and the importance of biblical theology, I am going to cite the scriptures. My method for selection of the texts I cite is as follows, and this is a method shared by a vast majority of Korean Christians and by most American evangelicals. We begin with the scriptures because it is a belief of our faith community that Scripture is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16). We read individual passages and try to listen carefully and also “prayerfully.” Reading individual passages prayerfully leads to an experience of inspiration. We then move gradually back to what we call biblical theology. That is, we have an understanding of God, Christ, Church, salvation, and Christian hope that comes from themes that run through the Bible as a whole. Biblical theology seeks to follow the flow of “redemptive narrative” as it unfolds and reflects the diversity of the Bible. It focuses on the narratives of the Bible in order to understand how each part of it ultimately points toward fulfillment in the life of Jesus Christ. While biblical theology engages with the work of philosophy and cultural and personal experience, it gives the Bible priority over each of these other lines of thought. From my Reformed perspective, biblical theology is a way of doing theological reflection on Scripture, which “proceeds with historical and literary sensitivity and seeks to analyze and synthesize the Bible’s teaching about God and his relations to the world on its own terms, maintaining sight of the Bible’s overarching narrative and Christocentric focus.”³ Like most evangelical thinkers, I see that there can be no gap between biblical theology

³ B. S. Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 10.

and systematic theology. God dictates the words of Scripture, and whatever we derive from the exegesis of the Bible is biblical theology and systematic theology.

My reading of the Bible resonates with postcolonial biblical scholars, who interpret the Bible from the experience of those who are colonized or victimized. They try to read the Bible with the awareness of personal or systemic injustice, oppression, or marginality, caused by colonization, endeavoring to uncover its problematic, contradictory nature.⁴ I also try to read the Bible from the margins over against the center and attend to the voices of suffering and affliction in the Bible. However, this project differs from postcolonial projects in that reading the Bible through the eyes of colonization is not my central task. Rather, I am giving my attentive ears to listen to the hopeful messages from the Bible. I believe that the Bible is the Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit, so my attitude is to read Scripture with awe and humbleness. It does not mean that I am not accepting or using the methods of contemporary biblical scholarship such as textual criticism, form criticism, or socio-historical criticism, among others. I use them, but with the awareness of the Bible as the Word of God. In this sense, I think my biblical method reflects many, if not all, Korean and Korean American Christian communities in which the evangelical interpretation of the Bible is prominent.

Following a biblical understanding of hope, we examine the contemporary theological understanding of hope which deals primarily with theologians who belong to the school of thought that during the 20th century developed a theology of hope.⁵ I focus

⁴ R. S. Sugirtharajah provides a succinct but helpful introduction to postcolonial biblical interpretation. See R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Postcolonial biblical interpretation," in R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, rev. and expanded 3rd ed. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006), 64-84. For biblical interpretation from the perspective of Asian American scholars, see Tat-siong Benny Liew, ed., *The Bible in Asian America* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

⁵ For a brief history of the theology of hope school, see Herbert, *Living Hope*, 49-52.

primarily on two systematic theologians—Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg—who have articulated the centrality of hope in Christian theology. I chose these two theologians because of their commitment to, in different ways, articulating the primacy of the future perspective manifested in the history of Israel and in the message of Jesus Christ. Even though they have different theological positions, both are faithful to the biblical perspective in which the coming of God or the coming God is the central theme of their theological system.

It might be helpful to articulate the closest conceptual possibilities to my own view in relation to eschatology and Christian hope.⁶ To the left is the variant of Pannenberg's position, which does not say that the end of history was proleptically revealed in the midst of history, definitely in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pannenberg says that we know that the final outcome is clear: The end of history has already been present in the midst of history and all things are defined in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁷ This is the foundation of Christian hope. The variant view that is espoused by process thinkers claims that God acted in Christ and something occurred in history: God manifested something of God's nature and this is the ground for future hope. This view asserts that, however, it is not a definite revelation of final outcome in the midst of history. It is a sacrament, a promise of the future; yet, suffering and uncertainty continue and evil prevails. There is some ground of hope and God is somewhat involved in it, but there is a little bit more process theology in this view. That is, the "lure of God" is

⁶ I am indebted to theologian Philip Clayton, one of my dissertation committee members, for helping me pay attention to what he called "imaginative variations" in order to clarify my theological position.

⁷ See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus, God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 53-114. Pannenberg mentions, "Only because the end of the world is already present in Jesus' resurrection is God himself revealed in him" (69).

revealed in Christ, but the final prolepsis is not present in history through the life and death of Jesus Christ.⁸

From my Moltmannian and Pannenbergian view, the process view of eschatology, especially its Christology, is too low, in that there is no strong basis for eschatology if we do not accept that Jesus Christ is the definite revelation of God through which the end of history was proleptically present. As revealed in the following pages, I see Christian eschatology as deeply rooted in the salvific love of Jesus Christ that was expressed through his death and resurrection. Without the recognition of this foundation, Christian eschatology cannot be strong enough to provide the basis and foundation of hope and the future. Thus, Christian eschatology has to do with the relation of *eschaton* to the Christ event.

To the right of my theological position is a fundamentalist understanding of eschatology and hope. According to this view, it might seem that my perspective provides too much of a gap between Jesus' resurrection and future eschatology. They might claim that because Christ is raised from the dead, Christians ought to be triumphant in all circumstances. If Christians are not living triumphantly, claiming the promise of the presence of Christ in their lives here and now, they commit a sin. A Christian who prays for healing and does not get healed lacks faith. In this point of view, my Christology looks too low. Though I appreciate this view because of the strong faith and commitment to the Christian belief, I would say that this view does not reflect and

⁸ For the process view of eschatology, see Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The End of Evil: Process Eschatology in Historical Context*, SUNY Series in Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988); Joseph A. Bracken, ed., *World without End: Christian Eschatology from a Process Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005). See also John Cobb, "Is There a Process Eschatology?" <http://www.processandfaith.org/askcobb/2004/12-ProcessEschatology.shtml> (accessed March 11, 2011).

consider realities of human existence, which are filled with suffering, predicament, and pain. I claim that the Moltmannian and Pannenbergian view offers more nuanced and contextualized understandings of Christian eschatology than the fundamentalist perspective, in that this view takes realities of the world seriously, a world where evil, suffering, and oppression are ever present. For this reason, I see my theological perspective in relation to eschatology, which is supported by Pannenberg and Moltmann, as *preferable to fundamentalism*.

This chapter builds on the assumption that Christian theology of hope is historically developed through the salvation history of God in the lives of Israel and early Christians. Through the theological investigation, it will be revealed that hope is based on the truthfulness of God who keeps his promise with his people, and that our ultimate foundation of hope is rooted in a loving and trustworthy God, who is also compassionate and voluntarily participates in human suffering.

Narratives of Suffering and Hope in the Hebrew Bible

This section describes three important elements of the Hebrew Bible, which show the theme of suffering and hope: (1) oppression and the Exodus story, (2) lamentation psalms and hope, and (3) hopeful imagination of prophets. In these elements, the God of the Hebrew Bible reveals himself as the provider of hope through his engagement with human beings and, accordingly, God becomes the fundamental source of hope. It needs to be mentioned that I do not claim that these three elements represent all the narratives of the Bible regarding the theme of hope and suffering. The list of hopeful narratives is not exhaustive. However, my choice is based on my own reading of the Hebrew Bible that clearly shows the significant dimensions of hope in the lived experience of the

Israelites, the people of God. Since I am not a biblical specialist, I refer readers to the excellent works of Walter Brueggemann, Claus Westermann, Gerhard von Rad, Bernard Anderson, and Walther Eichrodt.

Oppression and the Exodus

The narrative of the Exodus from Egypt is the root experience of hope in the history of Israel because this story is widely remembered and celebrated as a central narrative of Israelite history.⁹ From a Christian perspective, this is a magnificent salvation story, through which the Israelites experience the reality of God as their savior as well as the presence of God in their lives. In the history of Israel, there is no event equal to the influence of the Exodus on the establishment of its faith community, and the narrative of the deliverance from Egypt becomes one of the crucial faith confessions. Five decades ago, the prominent Old Testament¹⁰ theologian Gerhard von Rad claimed that the description of YHWH, as the one “who brought Israel out of Egypt,” is “the earliest and . . . the most widely used of . . . confessional formulae” that describe God’s action in history.¹¹ The book of Deuteronomy vividly depicts the narrative of the Exodus story:

A wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. Then we cried to the LORD the God of our fathers, and the LORD

⁹ Old Testament theologian Walter Brueggemann says that “the governing example of biblical hope is the Exodus narrative. That event is the primal act of hope in the Bible.” See Brueggemann, *Hope within History*, 87.

¹⁰ I am aware that some readers may argue against the term *Old Testament*, due to its implied status in relation to the New Testament. I use this term interchangeably with *Hebrew Bible*, since both terms are currently used in scholarly writing. I prefer the term *Old Testament* because I write from a Christian perspective.

¹¹ Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962-1965), 1:121.

heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.¹²

This magnificent narrative, or the “Credo,” as von Rad has named it, delivers us one of the most dramatic testimonies of ancient Israel’s faith.¹³

In the Credo in Deut. 26:5-9, we see three important elements: (1) the description of affliction, (2) crying out to Yahweh, and (3) God’s deliverance. “A wandering Aramean” refers to Jacob, the son of Isaac. After years of prosperity in Egypt, the Israelites become slaves of the atrocious Egyptian Empire, experiencing severe distress, oppression, and affliction (“the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage”).¹⁴ Out of suffering, the people of Israel “cried to Yahweh, the God of our fathers.”¹⁵ Listening to their voice and seeing their affliction, God delivers them from oppression and bondage and brings them into “a land flowing with milk and honey.” Another prominent Old Testament scholar, Bernhard W. Anderson, describes the nature of God in the Exodus story in this way: “This God, whose name is Yahweh, is not remote and inaccessible; he is the God who makes himself present, who is ‘with us’ (Immanuel).”¹⁶ Through the Exodus, the Israelites encounter a God who works in their history with almighty grace and presence. “Thus the Exodus story, from beginning to the

¹² Deut. 26: 5-9 (RSV). For comparison, see Joshua 24: 2-13 and Deut. 6:20-23.

¹³ von Rad considers the Credo in Deut. 26:5-9 as the “most important” historical statement that describes God’s saving history. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:121-22.

¹⁴ According to Exodus 1:1-11, the Israelites were forced to work to build two supply cities in the delta area of Goshen.

¹⁵ On the function of the lament in the theology of the Old Testament, see Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 259-80.

¹⁶ Bernhard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 31.

end, is told to praise and glorify the God who manifested his saving power by creating the historical reality known as Israel and by giving this people a future in his purpose.”¹⁷

The climax of the Exodus narrative is probably the miracle at the Red Sea where the Israelites experience the marvelous intervention of God.¹⁸ According to Exodus chapter 14, under the leadership of Moses the people of Israel successfully flee from the bondage of Egypt, but they are soon left with nowhere to turn between the Egyptians marching after them and the Red Sea. In this predicament, the God of Israel opens a new door for Israel to escape from the dilemma. The God-sent east wind causes the Red Sea to retreat so that the Israelites are able to run away from the Egyptians (Ex. 14:21-30). This miraculous experience of God’s salvation provides the Israelite the confidence that God “opens a way into the future when no way exists. He gives his people a new possibility—in grace.”¹⁹ As von Rad maintains, the deliverance from Egypt guarantees Israel for “all the future, the absolute surety” of Yahweh’s will to save, which is “something like a warrant to which faith could appeal in times of trial.”²⁰ This belief in the God of hope creates in the Israelites, perhaps for all believers who trust in God, the power to overcome distress, predicament, and even oppression.

¹⁷ Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 35.

¹⁸ For the understanding of miracle in the Old Testament, see Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961-1967), 2:162-67. Eichrodt maintains that the Israelites accept miracles mainly because they believe that God controls all things, including nature, as the Creator. I approach miracle, including the miracle at the Red Sea, with an assumption that miracle is possible and historically conceivable. One evidence of the historicity of the miracle of the Red Sea would be the “Song of Miriam” (Ex. 15:21), one of the oldest poetic couplets in the Bible, which is probably composed by one of the witnesses of the event of the crossing of the Sea. See also Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 33-35.

¹⁹ Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 31.

²⁰ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:176.

Lament in the Psalms and Hope

Another form of biblical witness to the theme of suffering and hope comes from lamentation psalms in the Hebrew Bible.²¹ Lamentation psalms show us that suffering and hope are not separated but intertwined, paradoxically. In the midst of suffering, whether individual or communal, the psalmist does not retreat to the state of desperation, despair, and hopelessness. Rather, the psalmist not only expresses her concerns by crying out of distress but also continues to hope and anticipate God's intervention and deliverance. The psalmist's foundation of hope is based on the "conviction that God is concerned about his people's condition and that, in ways surpassing human expectation, he answers their cry."²²

Anderson asserts that more than one third of the psalms are psalms of lamentation.²³ One of the main characteristics of lament psalms is the articulation of "complaints to God in a situation of limitation and threat."²⁴ From the depths of human anxiety, the psalmist pours out the emotions of bitterness and hatred toward God. One of the most prominent examples is Psalm 88, which is characterized by unanswered cry. In this psalm, the psalmist cries out in God's presence (v. 1), calls on God (v. 9b), and cries out to God (v. 13), but there is no response. Old Testament theologian Walter

²¹ For a short but good introduction to the psalms, see Anderson, *Out of the Depths*. For the understanding of the structure and history of lament in the Psalms, see Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 163-280. Westermann provides a structural view of the Psalter, using the form-critical method, influenced by Hermann Gunkel. See also Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*, Augsburg Old Testament Studies. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) and Kathleen D. Billman and Daniel L. Migliore, *Rachel's Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope* (Cleveland, Ohio: United Church Press, 1999).

²² Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 43.

²³ Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 42.

²⁴ Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 42. Brueggemann calls this "psalms of complaint." See Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 374-81.

Brueggemann states that it is striking that the psalmist continues to address Yahweh in the situation where the cries are left unanswered. It is probably because, as Brueggemann asserts, “Israel’s most elemental conviction concerns YHWH’s compassion, a conviction from which Israel is not dissuaded even by divine silence and indifference.”²⁵ Anderson mentions that complaints and bitterness toward God are not based on a “philosophical” or “theoretical atheism” where the existence and intervention of God are denied; rather, it is based on a “practical atheism” in which God’s action is invisible or hidden.²⁶ Through laments, the psalmist tries to make her concerns heard by God and expresses her longing for God’s action and deliverance. The psalmist’s crying out to God from the depth of her distress reminds us of cries of deliverance in the time of Egyptian oppression where to the people it seemed there was no hope.

It is notable to see that lament psalms often end with thanksgiving and praise.²⁷ Anderson asserts that one reason the psalmist moves from complaints or plea to praise or thanksgiving is that she has a belief through which the psalmist anticipates the future that will be opened by a loving and faithful God. The seemingly abrupt transition from plea to praise in most, if not all, lament psalms is made possible by “the deep confidence that God is an active God who intervenes to deliver.”²⁸ Trust in God who actively participates in human predicament and brings deliverance from affliction makes it

²⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 110.

²⁶ Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 43. Brueggemann has extensively explored the nature of the hiddenness, ambiguity, and negativity of God in the Old Testament. See Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 317-99.

²⁷ For instance, see Psalms 7, 13, 22, 56, etc. For the classification of psalms, see Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 173-77. Anderson’s classification includes salvation history psalms, laments (community and individual), songs of thanksgiving, hymns of praise, songs of trust and meditation, and others.

²⁸ Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 58.

possible for the psalmist to continue to hope in the midst of suffering. Thus, as Anderson argues, “psalms of lament” are not “the whinings of self-pity or agonized cries of utter despair”; rather, they are the expressions of the psalmist's joy in the “goodness of God and the goodness of the life he has given to his creatures,” even in situations of pain and suffering.²⁹ Kathleen Billman and Daniel Migliore support the assertion that Israel’s lament is not an “emotional outburst or an exercise in self-pity,” in that the psalmist’s capacity to maintain both lament and praise is based on Israel’s history in which God makes a covenant with Israel. In its covenantal context, lamentation is understood as a “cry for relief from suffering so that God may once again be praised.”³⁰ In this sense, the movement from lament to the song of thanksgiving or praise makes sense.

The move from the “minor” mode of complaint or plea to the “major” key of thanksgiving and praise, however, requires the time of waiting, anticipating, and “pause.” Anderson has provided a good distinction between the lament and the thanksgiving psalms. Lament psalms have a portion of thanksgiving, which praises God “in anticipation” of God’s intervention, while the “song of thanksgiving” expresses the gratitude “in response” to an event of deliverance already experienced.³¹ Even though the psalmist in lament does not give up hope for the future, it is still challenging for her to wait for the deliverance, because waiting requires patience, resilience, and faith in the

²⁹ Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 76-77.

³⁰ Billman and Migliore, *Rachel's Cry*, 30. Billman and Migliore provide a good summary of the characteristics of the “lament prayer” in the Old Testament. See Billman and Migliore, *Rachel's Cry*, 25-33. They emphasize the importance of the bold inclusion of prayers of lament, protest, and argumentation with God in the Bible: “Israel’s faith and hope are all the more remarkable for refusing to stifle the voice of anger, pain, and despair (33).”

³¹ Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 79.

midst of the reality of distress, oppression, and sorrow. Anderson aptly points out the challenging aspect of the waiting process and the importance of keeping faith alive.

Laments are praises in the time of God's absence, or . . . in the time when his presence is hidden. . . . in the time of God's silence men must *wait* for God to show himself. Yet such a time is the time to 'seek God's face' (see Ps. 27:7-14) in the confidence that he will open a way into the future when there seems to be no way.³²

Waiting in patience and courage, seeking God's face, demands that we maintain resilient hope, unrelenting faith, and unyielding endurance. The tremendous power of resilience and hopefulness comes from the belief that God provides the newness of the future through his steadfast love and faithfulness to those who await God's fate-averting intervention, which is the core message of the laments in the Psalter.

Prophetic Hope: Imaginative Voices of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel

Along with the poignant Exodus narrative and the hope-filled laments in the Psalms, prophetic traditions in the Hebrew Bible present a refreshing and noteworthy view of hope and suffering provided by such prophetic poets as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, who are appointed by God to deliver his message.³³ In the historical context where Israel is doomed to fall, which was realized through the Babylonian exile (beginning in 598 B.C.E.) and the fall of Jerusalem (587 B.C.E.), these prophets proclaim

³² Anderson, *Out of the Depths*, 72-73.

³³ See Walter Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 39-79; Brueggemann, *Hope within History*, 72-91; Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology*, 353-59; Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 622-49; Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2:263-77. Emphasizing the "poetic" nature and quality of the messages of prophets in the Old Testament, Brueggemann sees these prophets as "poets." In fact, it is true that the books of prophets are filled with poetic expressions and verses. Brueggemann states that "those whom the ancient Israelites called 'prophets,' the equally ancient Greeks call 'poets,'" quoting from George Anastaplo, *The Artist as Thinker: From Shakespeare to Joyce* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1983), 11. See Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 137, especially note 30.

the future which God would yet produce in the midst of suffering.³⁴ It is remarkable to see the great pictures and images of hope provided by prophets in the situation of loss, failure, hopelessness that Israel has to confront in the sixth century. The proclamation of “prophetic hope” in the context of hopelessness and despair is possible because of the God of Israel, which Brueggemann beautifully sketches as “the God of life who moves against the power of death,” “the God of freedom who moves against the enslavement” and “the God of creation who moves against the negating power of chaos.”³⁵

The hopeful imagination of the prophet Isaiah is described in chapters 40-66, which are filled with promises of God such as the restoration of the land, homecoming, and a new beginning for Israel.³⁶ It is important to mention that “those promises are addressed only to people in exile who have seen the city fall (40:2) and have suffered the loss of their entire world of faith”³⁷ because it is unavoidable to escape exile. In the context of the book of Isaiah, the new beginning begins with the negation of old systems, old organizations, and old traditions, or, historically speaking, the overthrow of the power and authority of the Babylonian empire, and a new departure with God who promises the return from exile and a rehabilitation of Jerusalem. Brueggemann argues that these prophetic hopes are not based on a “freelance, ad hoc operation that spins out novelty,”

³⁴ For the historical background of exile and “prophetic imagination” offered by prophets, see Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 1-7. Because of space limitations, I will focus on the traditions of so called three “great” prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, who were active in 8th to 6th century B.C.E. For the classical study of Israel’s prophetic traditions, see Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2.

³⁵ Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology*, 353.

³⁶ See Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology*, 292-95, 354-55. See also Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 90-130; Brueggemann, *Hope within History*, 67-79. Hopeful imagination is one of the key dimensions of hope, which I mentioned in chapters two and three and is explored in greater detail in chapter five. It is important not only theologically but also psychosocially.

³⁷ Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 90.

but “memories” in the history of Israel which are provided as “a new gift.”³⁸ Bauckham and Hart provide a different view that, though the prophet recalls the “former things” accomplished by God’s great acts of salvation, the future God shows is qualitatively different from the past events, so that “it cannot adequately be pictured or understood in terms of any familiar images or experiences.” This “transcendent” or “unprecedented” newness is the important characteristic of the prophetic imagination of Isaiah.³⁹ Thus, we would say that prophetic hopes that are provided by God reflect the radical newness of God, which is qualitatively distinctive from our past, though we may try to imagine our new future based on our memories of the past.

The voice of hope in the book of Jeremiah includes: chapter 29:10-14 (a prose oracle); chapters 30-31 (the return and rehabilitation in the land); chapter 32:1-15 (a narrative of land-buying); chapter 33 (a collection of brief promises); chapters 50-51 (the anticipated demise of Babylon and the return of the deportation Jews to the land of promise).⁴⁰ Like Isaiah, these hopeful announcements are articulated in the context of severe suffering—individual and communal—where the destruction of Jerusalem is anticipated, but the royal consciousness repudiates the reality, insisting “peace, peace” (Jer. 6:13-15) when only Jeremiah knows there is no peace. In the very midst of the hopelessness of defeat and inescapable judgment, Jeremiah continues to articulate an alternative vision for the future that he was sure God would provide. For instance,

³⁸ See Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 102. Brueggemann provides examples of important memories of Israel’s history that permit articulation of new possibilities: the narratives of Abraham and Sarah (51:2-3) and Sarah’s hope for a child (54:1-3); Noah (54:9-11); and David (55:3). On the “historicity” of hope, see Brueggemann, *Hope within History*. According to Brueggemann, “Hope is relentlessly historical and history is cunningly hope-filled” (p. 3).

³⁹ Bauckham and Hart, *Hope against Hope*, 77-80.

⁴⁰ See Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology*, 288-90.

Jeremiah 32:1-15 delivers an astonishing narrative in which Jeremiah buys land that might be useless if occupied by the invaders. Jeremiah follows the command of God because he has the conviction that God can do the “impossible,” creating a future out of a hopeless present.⁴¹ As Brueggemann asserts, “Jeremiah puts himself on the record as a hoper against circumstances. The basis of his action is an unprovable, unmeasured word that there will be a future underived from the present.”⁴² Though his hope is coupled with tremendous grief and sorrow, Jeremiah continues to be a “poet of hope” because his hope is based on promises of God (for example, the demise of Babylon), a hope which is independent from the present but is a gift from God, who would act in unqualified freedom. This hope has “uncompromised rootage of vision,” and it is especially the memory of the Exodus that serves as the vision's root.⁴³

In conjunction with the “resilient hope” conveyed by the poet of hope, it is worth noting that Jeremiah is a man of deep grief. Indeed, the book of Jeremiah is filled with this sense of loss and grief.⁴⁴ Brueggemann has explored the theological significance of articulating the emotion of grief in the midst of suffering because of its salugenic nature. According to Brueggemann, “only grief permits newness” because “pain felt and articulated in God’s heart permits new possibilities in the historical process—the good

⁴¹ See Walter Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones: Listening for the Prophetic Word in Jeremiah*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 180-88. Elsewhere, Brueggemann mentions that Jeremiah has “the capacity to speak newness out of nullity. . . . Jeremiah’s vitality comes precisely from his passionate conviction about the power of God to work a newness in the zero hour of loss and exile.” See Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 29.

⁴² Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones*, 183.

⁴³ Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones*, 181.

⁴⁴ See Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 29-31. Jeremiah’s grief is expressed, especially, in Jer. 8:18-9:3 and 15:5-21.

news concerns God's transformed heart."⁴⁵ The God of Jeremiah was not an apathetic and uninterested God; rather, as the God of hope, Yahweh listened to his cries and sorrows with a compassionate heart, willing to intervene. Knowing God's heart, Jeremiah did not retreat into unexpressed rage that might hinder any possibility of hope. Instead, by staying close to Yahweh in his articulation of pained, anguished, and overwhelmed despair, Jeremiah invited new possibilities that God would provide for the future. In this sense, Brueggemann argues, "Indeed it is in the specific, concrete expression of despair that there come the seeds and possibilities of hope."⁴⁶ Paradoxically, the utterance of grief in the midst of hopelessness and despair creates the "rhetorical, psychological, theological possibility of hope"⁴⁷ The grief of Jeremiah becomes the ground of hope, which is based on the compassion of God who permits newness out of grief and suffering.

Hope in the book of Ezekiel is articulated in three different modes: restoration to the land and the resumption of viable social infrastructure (chapters 34, 36, and 37); the glorification of Yahweh and the rescue of Israel (chapter 39); and the reestablishment of a pure cult in Jerusalem (chapters 40-48).⁴⁸ Hope in the tradition of Ezekiel, however, has a very different look. Unlike with Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Ezekiel tradition does not talk about compassion or love or pardon. Its focus is on the "self-regard of the Holy One: "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have

⁴⁵ Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 41.

⁴⁶ Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones*, 187.

⁴⁷ Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones*, 187.

⁴⁸ Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology*, 358-59.

profaned among the nations to which you came” (Ezekiel 36:22).⁴⁹ Thus, according to the book of Ezekiel, “the ground of Israel’s future is YHWH’s own holiness, perhaps a deeper grounding than the poetry of pathos given us in Jeremiah.”⁵⁰ In other words, the prophet Ezekiel declares God as ground for hope, while Jeremiah has grounded hope in God’s yearning pathos and Isaiah in the new future that God will offer. The common ground is that, however, as Brueggemann rightly suggests, “suffering does indeed produce hope, but only in a community where memories and promises of fidelity witness against circumstances. These prophetic traditions attest to the emergence and utterance of hope precisely amid suffering.”⁵¹ Having examined narratives of hope in the Old Testament, we now move on to explore the meanings of hope in the New Testament.

New Testament and Hope

The New Testament provides profound images of hope through the ministry of Jesus Christ, the son of God, manifested in his miracles, the proclamation of the imminent Kingdom of God, and his crucifixion and resurrection. In addition, Pauline theology presents a deep understanding of hope, covering the broadest use of the words for hope and the most developed concept of hope through the Pauline Letters. This section explores three important dimensions of hope in the New Testament: (1) hope in Jesus’ ministry; (2) crucifixion and resurrection as the ground of Christian hope; (3) hope in Pauline theology. These three characterizations are my own selection from the reading of the New Testament and do not imply that there are no other significant accounts

⁴⁹ Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology*, 296. See also Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 50-87.

⁵⁰ Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology*, 296.

⁵¹ Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology*, 299.

besides these.⁵² I see these three dimensions of hope standing out among other aspects of the New Testament that show images of hope.

Hope in Jesus' Ministry

The New Testament presents us remarkable stories in which the hopeless gain renewed hope, the oppressed find freedom, and the poor become the recipients of the kingdom of heaven. In the Gospels, we find that Jesus reveals himself as the provider of hope to people who are suffering through poverty, marginality, oppression, and/or illness. The hopeful ministry of Jesus is manifested in his miracles and preaching. It is striking that Jesus regarded the ministry of healing as the primary goal of his earthly ministry, along with teachings about the kingdom of God. It is true, as the New Testament theologian Leonhard Goppelt observes, that "Jesus referred first of all to his ministry of healing and then to the words of his preaching."⁵³ For Jesus, the kingdom of God brings not only a spiritual but also physical dimension of the dawn of salvation. In sum, Jesus' ministry can be characterized as a holistic approach which emphasizes both bodily and spiritual constituents.

Jesus is described by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as a very compassionate figure that has a deep interest in the suffering of his contemporaries. Through the ministry of healing, Jesus showed his compassion to people who were afflicted. Regardless of questions about the historicity of Jesus' miracles, it is true that

⁵² For other significant accounts of hope in the New Testament, see P. S. Minear, "Hope," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 2:641-42.

⁵³ Leonhard Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Jürgen Roloff, trans. John E. Alsup, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981-1982), 1:69.

the Gospels are filled with stories about “signs and wonders.”⁵⁴ The miracle stories of Jesus can be categorized as follows: (1) healing the physically ill; (2) healing the demon possessed; (3) bringing back to life those having just died (Mk. 5:21-43; Lk. 7:11-17; Jn. 11); (4) miracles in nature (the miraculous feedings, Mk. 6:30-44; 8:1-9; the stilling of the storm, Mk. 4:36-41; the walking on the water, Mk. 6:45-52; the miraculous catch of fishes, Lk. 5:1-11; the cursing of the fig tree, Mk. 11:12ff.; the miraculous turning of water into wine at Cana, Jn. 2:1-11).⁵⁵ The significance of Jesus’ miracles is that they show Jesus’ sincere concern with the reality of the human predicament. People came to Jesus to seek help, and Jesus responded with true compassion, providing physical cure, emotional support, and, ultimately, salvation. Jesus often related his miracles to faith, which is a human response based on confidence in Jesus’ authority (*exousia*).⁵⁶ It is important to add, however, that, as Goppelt mentions, “Faith emerged when Jesus turned . . . to the individual person who was seeking his help in a particular crisis, and when he vouchsafed his fellowship in concrete address and help.”⁵⁷ Thus, the remarkable stories of healing clearly show that Jesus, who was willing to engage in human distress with its particularity and concreteness, provided new possibilities for the future to the sufferers who were experiencing difficulties, affliction, and oppression in their lives.

⁵⁴ Goppelt's bases for asserting the historicity of Jesus' healings are that the miracle stories cover a significant proportion of the ministry of Jesus and highlight the uniqueness of this ministry in his Jewish environment. On the historical analysis and the theological significance of the miracles of Jesus, see Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:139-57.

⁵⁵ See Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:140-41.

⁵⁶ For the understanding of miracles in relation to faith, see Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:149-55.

⁵⁷ Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:151.

Jesus also proclaims the message of hope through his preaching, especially through the articulation of ‘the Kingdom of God.’ There is agreement in general that the coming of the kingdom of God belongs to a central message of Jesus’ proclamation.⁵⁸ The Gospel of Mark reports the beginning of Jesus’ ministry like this: “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel’” (Mk 1:14-15). A thorough biblical survey regarding the concept of the kingdom of God is not necessary here for the purpose of this dissertation.⁵⁹ Rather, my focus is on how the message of the kingdom of God can be a sign of hope. The Kingdom of God denotes that God comes from the future to reign in the world. It is basically an eschatological view that means, in Bultmann’s words, “the regime of God which will destroy the present course of the world, wipe out all the contra-divine, Satanic power under which the present world groans—and thereby, terminate all pain and sorrow, bring in salvation for the People of God.”⁶⁰ Consider the impact of this proclamation on people who were suffering in those times. As theologian David Jensen describes it, “This coming intervention and establishment of God’s purpose on earth announces good news to a world wracked by sin.”⁶¹ As we know from history, Jesus’

⁵⁸ See Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, 2 vols. (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007), 1:3-11; Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:43-76; O. E. Evans, “Kingdom of God, of Heaven,” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:17; David H. Jensen, *Living Hope: The Future and Christian Faith* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 21.

⁵⁹ For a thorough examination of the kingdom of God, including its terminology and the overview of the history of research, see Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:43-76 and Evans, “Kingdom of God, of Heaven,” 3:17-26.

⁶⁰ Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:4. Though Bultmann believed in immediate eschatology, he understood it existentially, meaning that the coming of God meets us in every moment of our lives, thereby we might live every hour as though it were the last. See Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1: 52-54.

⁶¹ Jensen, *Living Hope: The Future and Christian Faith*, 21.

proclamation of the imminent kingdom of God has not yet been fulfilled. Still, it is a significant symbol of hope in that the kingdom of God, in a sense, is already arrived, though not in fullness, through the ministry of Jesus on earth.⁶² For instance, Jesus' ministry of healing, blessing, touching, and feeding represents the important indicators of the embodiment of the kingdom of God.⁶³ As Oscar Cullmann suggests, we are living in a state of "already, but not yet," with an eschatological tension between the *already* of Jesus' ministry on earth, and the *not yet* of his *parousia* (the Second Coming). Living in the meantime demands enduring tribulations, but Christians believe that the kingdom of God will be coming someday in the future, which provides a tremendous assurance to live in hope in this world.

Crucifixion and Resurrection: The Ground of Christian Hope

Through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the message of hope in the New Testament is demonstrated with the greatest force. Though death by crucifixion is public disrepute for non-believers, Christians view the Crucifixion as the "most intense demonstration of Christ's love and power, and the symbol of the Christian's own union with his [*sic*] Lord."⁶⁴ The event of the Crucifixion shows the unfailing love of God and the self-giving sacrifice of his son Jesus. The Crucifixion presents people a suffering God who knows the reality of pain and death. This crucified Jesus is "our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1), in that Christians believe that this Jesus is now alive with God, overcoming the fatality of death. "It is the fact of his rising from the dead to life with God which makes

⁶² Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:61-67.

⁶³ Jensen, *Living Hope: The Future and Christian Faith*, 24-26.

⁶⁴ Pierson Parker, "Crucifixion," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 1:747.

our hope possible and meaningful,” Gerald O’Collins wrote.⁶⁵ Christian hope arises from and is determined by the resurrection of the crucified Jesus.⁶⁶ Jensen expands the meanings of the resurrection into the present. According to Jensen, “Resurrection faith does not so much console the suffering as it empowers them for new life here, now, and into the future.”⁶⁷ As the recipients of resurrection faith, Christians do not “resign themselves to status quo injustice in the promise of a better world after death,” but accept it as an “invitation to receive the abundance of life now and to be gathered into God’s labors on behalf of life: labors for justice and for peace.”⁶⁸ In this way, crucifixion and resurrection become the pivotal foundation of Christian hope, not only for the future, but also for the present.

It is striking that no research participants explicitly mentioned the Crucifixion and the resurrection as related to Christian hope. Is it because this theme is not important to Korean American Christians? Or are these interviewees not aware of the connection between Christian hope and the Cross and resurrection? From my personal experience, participating in Korean American faith communities, I do not believe that the Crucifixion and the resurrection are unknown or insignificant for the lives of this population. Many Korean ethnic churches observe Lent, Good Friday, and the resurrection through worship, Holy Communion, and other spiritual practices, in which Jesus’ suffering and his glorious resurrection are remembered and celebrated, and, as a result, become a foundation of Christian hope. Thus, though the interviewees did not talk about resurrection in its

⁶⁵ O’Collins, *Man and His New Hopes*, 68.

⁶⁶ This point is bolstered by Moltmann. See the following pages.

⁶⁷ Jensen, *Living Hope: The Future and Christian Faith*, 37.

⁶⁸ Jensen, *Living Hope: The Future and Christian Faith*, 37.

relation to Christian hope, it does not mean that resurrection is not an element of hope. In fact, the eschatological vision, which the interviewees mentioned as a source of hope, is based on resurrection faith in that through resurrection in the *eschaton*, Christians will meet God in heaven and enjoy everlasting life with God, an expression of faith in which most Korean Christians share. Thus, we can say that the Cross and the resurrection remain important elements of Christian hope in the experience of Korean American Christians.⁶⁹

Hope in Pauline Theology

Paul's theology provides us a good description of hope in terms of the Christian perspective. First of all, Paul sees God as the source and ground of hope, as expressed in one of his Letters as the "God of hope" (Rom. 15:13). Hope rests upon God's calling and upon his promise (Rom. 4:17-21).⁷⁰ Paul also mentions that Jesus Christ is the ground of hope ("Christ Jesus our hope," 1 Tim. 1:1; cf. Eph. 1:21; 1 Thess. 1:3), the primary evidence of which is the resurrection (1 Cor. 15; cf. 1 Pet. 1:3).⁷¹ In addition, the power to hope comes from God to human beings through the Holy Spirit, which dwells in their hearts (Rom. 5:5; 15:13; Gal. 5:5).⁷²

In terms of the nature of hope, Paul offers a deeper understanding of hope, such as "hoping against hope" (Rom. 4:18). Using the narrative of Abraham, who believed or trusted in God ("hoped") against all human evidence or odds ("against hope"), Paul

⁶⁹ For practical theologian Russell Herbert, the absolute belief in the resurrection is the primary foundation of Christian hope. See Russell Herbert, *Living Hope: A Practical Theology of Hope for the Dying* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2006).

⁷⁰ Minear, "Hope," 2:641.

⁷¹ Allen C. Myers, ed., *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 501.

⁷² Minear, "Hope," 2:642.

emphasizes the radicality of hope which encourages us to overcome the human situation through faith or confidence in God “who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist” (Rom. 4:17).⁷³ Thus, for Paul, hope and faith are deeply intertwined. Along with “hoping against hope,” Paul also provides a deeper interpretation of hope by utilizing such shorter expressions as “the God of hope” (Rom. 15:13), “abound in hope” (Rom. 15:13), and “rejoice in your hope” (Rom. 12:12).⁷⁴ For Paul, hope plays an important role to link the two dimensions of “already/not-yet of the salvation event in Christ” and assures Christian believers to remain faithful to their faith (Rom. 11:22; 1 Cor. 15:2).⁷⁵

As a response to God, Paul sees that hope is associated with various aspects of Christian life, which include unshakable confidence (Rom. 4:18; 5:5), rejoicing (Rom. 5:2; 12:12), steadfast endurance (Rom. 5:4; 8:25; 12:12; 1 Thess. 1:3), boldness (II Cor. 3:12; Phil 1:20), freedom (Rom. 8:21; Gal 5:5), peace (Rom. 5:1; 12:13; Eph. 2:13ff), and love (1 Cor. 13:7).⁷⁶ It is well known that hope is part of three theological virtues; the other two are faith and love. As one of three theological virtues, hope goes with faith and love in its mutual, interacting relationships. Paul relates hope to “trustful waiting,” living in the already/not yet tension in the world (Rom. 8:18-25), but Paul also proposes a hope that goes beyond trustful endurance and mere expectation. “The faith which waits in hope is a faith that is effective in love,” which represents a responsible and active side of

⁷³ Torrence Prendergast, “Hope (NT),” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:284.

⁷⁴ K. P. Donfried, “Hope,” in *The Harpercollins Bible Dictionary*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 435.

⁷⁵ Donfried, “Hope,” 435.

⁷⁶ Minear, “Hope,” 2:642.

hope.⁷⁷ For Paul, living with hope in the world demands Christians to experience “trials” or “tribulations,” but hope thrives on trials, and on the experience of suffering (Rom. 5:1-5; 8:17; 12:12; II Cor. 1:3-7), in that hope sustains the believer amidst adversity. Paul emphasizes that Christian hope “derives its inner structure from the victory over death” in the event of the “death-resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:1; I Thess. 4).”⁷⁸

The Pauline understanding of hope resonates with the experience voiced by my research participants. First of all, for my interviewees, hope is predicated on the presence, power, and availability of God. God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are among primary sources of hope, along with human relationships, eschatological vision, and religious resources. Like Paul, Christian hope provides the research participants power and courage to endure challenges in their lives. For some interviewees, the resilient spirit that is related to hope comes from the eschatological vision to meet God in the end of the world. Many interviewees express, however, that it is important to live an active, responsible, and meaningful life in this world, as showed in their life stories (e.g., working hard, maintaining integrity in life, and being positive). Though they already have gotten through many challenges and know the reality of possible impediments in their lives, Christian hope, based on a trustworthy and loving God, enables them to maintain their hopefulness.

Recent Theological Conceptualizations of Hope

Having explored the meanings and conceptualizations of biblical hope, I turn in this section to the examination of two systematic theologians’ work—Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg. Since the primary focus is to explore their work in its relation

⁷⁷ O’Collins, *Man and His New Hopes*, 49.

⁷⁸ Minear, “Hope,” 2:642.

to Christian hope, we will not deal with the whole system of their philosophical and theological writings. A main reason to choose these theologians is that they provide significant insights and theological wisdom to perceive hope from a Protestant Christian perspective. Their articulation of eschatology and hope gives voice to the central message of Christian belief. In fact, they are arguably among the finest systematic theologians alive, faithful to the biblical and Christian tradition prized by Korean American communities. Moltmann is well-known to Korean audiences, both clergy and laypersons; he has visited Korea several times to offer conferences and seminars. Pannenberg, though less known in Korea than Moltmann, brings a new perspective to Korean scholars and theologians.

Jürgen Moltmann: A Theology of Hope

Jürgen Moltmann, a prominent German Protestant theologian, has been a leading voice of a theological interpretation of hope, proclaiming the importance of hope for the future based on the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that is, hope for the coming Kingdom of God. Moltmann's concern with the phenomenon of hope is initially rooted in his own experience as a prisoner-of-war, especially his personal encounters with brokenness and pain.⁷⁹ Throughout his writings, Moltmann has emphasized the central importance of eschatology in Christian faith and theology, and maintained eschatological hope—hope for “the coming of God”—as his primary theological theme. In the following pages, we will explore the theology of Moltmann, focusing on his theology of hope, the notion of a co-suffering God, and Christian eschatology.

⁷⁹ See Moltmann, *Experiences of God*, 6-9; Herbert, *Living Hope*, 54-57.

Living Hope: *Theology of Hope*

In his seminal book, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, Moltmann sees Christian faith as essentially hope for the future of human beings and the world, promised by the God of exodus and the resurrection of the crucified Jesus.⁸⁰ Thus for him, eschatology expresses the attitude of expectancy that underlies all of faith. For Moltmann, however, Christian eschatology does not mean “the future as such”: it sets out from a “reality in history” and announces “the future of that reality, its future possibilities and its power over the future.”⁸¹ Moltmann presents Christian eschatology as an active doctrine of hope in order to give hope for an alternative future to the oppressed and suffering of our present time. Moltmann emphasizes that true Christian hope is not founded in the possibilities innate in human potential, because human hope cannot endure the destructive power of death, illness, and brokenness. Our hope needs to be based on something bigger than human efforts to make a better future; Christian hope finds its foundation in the transcendence of *God’s promised future*, which is the central theme of Moltmann’s theology of hope. Moltmann writes:

It [Christian theology of hope] is not grounded in optimism, but in faith. It is not a theology *about* hope, but a theology growing *out of* hope in God. The basis of this hope does not lie in the ups and downs of the moods of the time, but in the promise of the coming God. These promises of God have been incarnated in the promissory history of Israel and in the promissory history of Jesus of Nazareth.⁸²

⁸⁰ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*.

⁸¹ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 17.

⁸² Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 45.

Moltmann also emphasizes resurrection as the foundation of Christian hope when he claims that “the God who has raised Christ and who lets the power of the resurrection dwell in us . . . is the ground for active and for passive hope.”⁸³

It is well known that Moltmann’s theology of hope was influenced by Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch, especially his notion of *novum*, the qualitative new future that can only be described as the ‘not yet.’ According to Bloch, the human condition should be understood in terms of the possibilities that lie ahead. In order to realize these possibilities it is our task to look not to some past golden age but to the future. Bloch emphasizes “man’s openness to the world” with an ontology of the world’s openness to humanity.⁸⁴ However, even if Moltmann utilizes some of the conceptual framework of Bloch’s principle of hope, he does not think that Bloch’s *novum* is radical enough, in that such hope, which only has the innate processes of history with which to conceive of a future, lacks the radical newness that only the transcendence of God can bring. Bloch’s “hope without faith” cannot confront the reality of nothingness.⁸⁵ If innate human potential provides finite possibilities, Christian hope in God presents newness even in the face of nothingness. Moltmann writes, “Even where the force of the negative puts an end to all possibilities of man and nature, trust is placed in God, for God is the power of a future which provides itself creative over against total nothingness.”⁸⁶ Moltmann continues, “If Christian hope derives from trust in the God ‘who gives life to the dead and

⁸³ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 9.

⁸⁴ See Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), originally published in German as *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (1938-1947).

⁸⁵ See Jürgen Moltmann, “Ernst Bloch and Hope without Faith,” in *The Experiment Hope*, 30-43.

⁸⁶ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 35.

calls into existence the things that do not exist' (Rom. 4:17), it has confidence enough to wage open war against the negative forces according to the possibilities which open it up."⁸⁷ Compared to Bloch's hope which highlights the not-yetness of the future or an open possibility, Moltmann proposes a Christian hope which is not "hope in an open possibility," but "hope in the power of God which calls nonbeing into being."⁸⁸

In Moltmann's theology of hope, the eschatological understanding of the resurrection plays a central role. Emphasizing that "Christian hope is resurrection hope," Moltmann states that Christian hope is based on the "contradiction between the resurrection and the cross."⁸⁹ This implies the contradictions we meet in our lives: suffering and the future promised by God; death and future life; and brokenness and wholeness. It is significant that the Jesus who is resurrected is the same Jesus who is crucified. Thus, "the resurrection of the crucified one" reveals continuity within radical discontinuity. An important point of Moltmann's theology is the *paradoxical* nature of hope in which hope "shines out of the denial of all possible hope through the crucifixion of Christ into the Easter appearance."⁹⁰ "With the raising of Jesus all has not yet been done," Moltmann asserts, "The resurrection has set in motion an eschatologically determined process of history, whose goal is the annihilation of death in the victory of the life of the resurrection."⁹¹ In hope, human beings thus look to God's promise of the resurrection, by which all things will be made new, and strive towards the realization of

⁸⁷ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 35-36.

⁸⁸ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 36.

⁸⁹ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 18.

⁹⁰ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 36.

⁹¹ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 163.

God's kingdom on earth. Ultimately, only God can make this happen, but in hope we reach out beyond the present in mission and service in anticipation of God's promised future. In this sense, Christian hope is *living* hope which is "something to be encountered, caught up in, invigorated and transformed by."⁹²

Co-suffering God: *The Crucified God*

While *Theology of Hope* emphasizes "the *resurrection* of the crucified Christ," which focuses on "*anticipations* of the future of God in the form of promises and hopes," *The Crucified God* draws attention to "the *cross* of the risen Christ," in which the cross, death, and suffering of Christ in the world's sufferings are remembered.⁹³ Through this work, Moltmann attempts to convey the themes of dialectical love, suffering, and solidarity, that is, God's loving solidarity with the world in its suffering. Moltmann speaks of the significance of *theologia crucis* when he says, "Unless it apprehends the pain of the negative, Christian hope cannot be realistic and liberating."⁹⁴ Thus, Moltmann's theology of the cross provides a strong engagement with the reality of pain and death.

Unlike the traditional theological understanding of God, in which God is often depicted as an "apathetic God" (*theos apathes*),⁹⁵ *The Crucified God* highlights the *pathos* of God who not only suffers from the death of Jesus but also suffers with human

⁹² Herbert, *Living Hope*, 61.

⁹³ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 5.

⁹⁴ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 5.

⁹⁵ According to this notion of God, God is always "good and cannot be the cause of evil. God is perfect and thus has no needs. God is sufficient and thus needs neither love nor hate. Nothing can befall him that would make him suffer." See Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 73-74.

beings. In the event of the cross of Christ, Moltmann argues, both God the father and the Son suffer:

The son suffers dying, the Father suffers the death of the Son. The grief of the Father here is just as important as the death of the Son. The Fatherlessness of the Son is matched by the Sonlessness of the Father, and if God has constituted himself as the Father of Jesus Christ, then he also suffers the death of his Fatherhood in the death of the Son.⁹⁶

Against *protest atheism* which questions the justification of God in the face of the problem of suffering, especially after Auschwitz, Moltmann asserts the pathos of God: God suffers because God loves. Thus, for Moltmann, “God and suffering are no longer contradictions,” but “God’s being is in suffering and the suffering is in God’s being itself, because God is love.”⁹⁷ As the “suffering God,” God himself had suffered with the suffering of Israel,⁹⁸ and makes solidarity with us in our godforsakenness and suffering.

In his letters from a Nazi prison, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “Only the suffering God can help.”⁹⁹ Agreeing with Bonhoeffer, Moltmann goes deeper. Christian hope is not developed “in spite of suffering,” but “in and through that very context, for that is precisely where God is to be found.”¹⁰⁰ Christian hope “shines out of the denial of all possible hope through the crucifixion of Christ.”¹⁰¹ Thus, we human beings can “open

⁹⁶ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 243.

⁹⁷ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 227.

⁹⁸ Moltmann wrote, “The God who suffers in exile with Israel preserves the people from despair and fear. The realization of God’s fellow-suffering impedes apathy, maintains sympathy for God in life, and holds hope for the future of God open.” See Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 77.

⁹⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, enlarged ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 361. Cited in Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 47.

¹⁰⁰ Herbert, *Living Hope*, 62.

¹⁰¹ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 36.

ourselves to suffering and love” in “*sympatheia* with the *pathos* of God.”¹⁰² In the midst of suffering and despair in our lives, we can still keep “living hope” because our hope is based on the *crucified* Christ who is risen and knows the agony of suffering and death.

Christian Eschatology: *The Coming of God*

In his book *The Coming of God*, one of his series of “systematic contributions to theology,” Moltmann elaborates his eschatological view, explaining specific dimensions of eschatological expectation. Moltmann asks what Christian hope means for the individual (eternal life), for history (the kingdom of God), for the cosmos (new heaven—new earth), and for God (glory).¹⁰³ For Moltmann, however, eschatology is not about something apocalyptic—“The Last Things” or “The End of All things”—but rather about new beginnings. Moreover, it is about the “coming of God” and “the cosmic Shekinah of God.”¹⁰⁴ Thus, for Moltmann, the theme of Christian eschatology is not the end, but a new beginning or new creation.

Moltmann’s eschatology is based on his radical understanding of future as the mode of God’s existence. According to Moltmann, “God’s future is not that he will be as he was and is, but that he is on the move and coming towards the world.”¹⁰⁵ In other words, the future is not a dimension of God’s eternity; it is God’s own movement in which God comes to us. This gives the future of God a preeminence over God’s past and God’s present in his history. God’s actions in history in the past and the present are aimed at God’s coming and attain their significance from his future. If we understand

¹⁰² Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 303. [Emphasis in original.]

¹⁰³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

¹⁰⁴ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, xi, xiii.

¹⁰⁵ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 23.

God as the “power of a new future,” we do not look from the present into the future, but from the future into the present. “We do not *extrapolate* the future out of the present; rather we *anticipate* the future in the present.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, “as the Coming One,” Moltmann asserts, “through his promises and his Spirit . . . God now already sets present and past in the light of his eschatological arrival, an arrival which means the establishment of his eternal kingdom, and his indwelling in the creation renewed for that indwelling.”¹⁰⁷ Moltmann’s notion of the “coming God” provides us a fresh understanding of the future and challenges us to consider time and eternity in a different way. As the “power of the future” and the “coming one,” God is already present in the way in which his future, in promise and hope, empowers the present.

Wolfhart Pannenberg: The Theology of the Future

Pannenberg’s theology provides us a unique understanding of Christian hope from the perspective of philosophical theology. Two primary reasons have guided my choice of Pannenberg as a conversation partner in this dissertation. One is because his powerful and persuasive argument of the importance of eschatology emphasizes the future perspective, and a second is his expanded doctrine of God as the reality that determines everything and as the power of the future. Pannenberg’s eschatological hope and his understanding of God help to assess the importance of the eschatological view of hope and the nature of God, which were expressed by the research participants. Because it is not my intention here to explore Pannenberg’s systematic theology in whole, I limit my focus to the examination of his major concern with the role of the future in Christian

¹⁰⁶ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 52.

¹⁰⁷ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 23.

theology.¹⁰⁸ More specifically, I explicate four important topics in Pannenberg's theology of the future: (1) his comprehensive eschatology; (2) his notion of the ontological priority of the future; (3) his understanding of God as the power of the future; (4) his goal of theology to provide the reason for Christian hope.

Pannenberg's Comprehensive Eschatology

Pannenberg's theology focuses on the *eschaton* and is deeply related to Christian hope for the future.¹⁰⁹ The retrieval of eschatology into the center of the theological agenda originates from his ground-breaking understanding of Jesus' view of the kingdom of God.¹¹⁰ Informed by the tradition of Christian eschatology, along with Johannes Weiss's rediscovery of the centrality of the futurist eschatology to the message of Jesus, Pannenberg claims that the starting point for Christian theology should be "the Kingdom of God understood as the eschatological future brought about by God himself."¹¹¹ The idea of kingdom of God, which finds the source of the term in the apocalyptic movement and the teaching of Jesus, Pannenberg maintains, is "no longer a marginal problem of

¹⁰⁸ For the major work of Pannenberg, his *magnum opus*, see Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991-1998). For a helpful introduction of Pannenberg's theology, see Grenz, *Reason for Hope* and Carl E. Braaten and Philip Clayton, eds., *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: Twelve American Critiques, with an Autobiographical Essay and Response* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988). On the understanding of Pannenberg's eschatological doctrine of God, which emphasizes the futurity of God, see Mostert, *God and the Future*.

¹⁰⁹ On Pannenberg's eschatology, see chapter 15, "The Consummation of Creation in the Kingdom of God," in Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3:527-646.

¹¹⁰ On the importance of an eschatological theology in contemporary theology, see Mostert, *God and the Future*, 20-25.

¹¹¹ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 53. On the history of the treatment of eschatology in Christian tradition, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3:527-55. Pannenberg emphasizes the works of Karl Barth, Jürgen Moltmann, and Gerhard Sauter in their efforts to place eschatology as an important focus of Christian theology.

theology”; rather it is “the basis upon which everything in Christian tradition is built.”¹¹² Putting the eschatological nature of the biblical message of the kingdom in its center, Pannenberg emphasizes, as Grenz puts it, “the final lordship of God over creation, which lordship has already broken into history in the appearance of Jesus.”¹¹³ The resurrection of Jesus from the dead, a central tradition of Christianity, is also understood in terms of the eschatological perspective.¹¹⁴ Thus, as Grenz notes, “En route to the *eschaton* the Christian community lives in hopeful expectation of the final consummation of God’s rule over the entire world. Only then will the glory and reality of the triune God revealed in his rulership be fully demonstrated.”¹¹⁵

The Ontological Priority of the Future

In relation to the eschatological understanding of Christian theology, Pannenberg is concerned with the establishment of the philosophical, especially ontological, basis of his eschatological theology. This is because he believes that the “priority of the eschatological future which determines our present demands a reversal . . . in our ontological conceptions.”¹¹⁶ Pannenberg’s main argument is this: “just as in Jesus’ preaching the future kingdom of God already determines the present, without ceasing to be a future reality, so the future is ontologically prior to the present and is in some sense

¹¹² Wolfhart Pannenberg, “Can Christianity Do Without an Eschatology?” in G. B. Caird et al., *The Christian Hope*, Theological Collections, 13 (London: S.P.C.K., 1970), 31. Cited in Mostert, *God and the Future*, 21. On the influence of apocalyptic in Pannenberg’s understanding of the kingdom of God, see Mostert, *God and the Future*, 27-43.

¹¹³ Grenz, *Reason for Hope*, 9.

¹¹⁴ On Pannenberg’s understanding of Christology, see Pannenberg, *Jesus, God and Man*. See also Mostert, *God and the Future*, 43-54.

¹¹⁵ Grenz, *Reason for Hope*, 9.

¹¹⁶ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 54.

determinative of the present—and thus of the past.”¹¹⁷ Pannenberg finds the rationale of his somewhat bold statement of the ontological primacy of the future in Jesus’ message. In his early work, Pannenberg mentions that in the center of Jesus’s message is the idea of the *imminent* Kingdom of God. While Jewish tradition emphasizes the law given through Moses, Pannenberg argues, Jesus proclaims the “eschatological hope,” “the hope of God’s coming Kingdom.”¹¹⁸ Even though Jesus talked about the presence of the Kingdom of God in his message, the core of Jesus’ preaching in the proclamation of the Kingdom of God was the coming rule of God which belongs to the future. Thus, for Pannenberg, “Futurity is fundamental for Jesus’ message.”¹¹⁹

This priority of the eschatological future makes Pannenberg think about the place of the future in a different way from conventional thought, which sees the future as an extension of the past and present. According to Pannenberg, “The future is neither empty category nor bundle of chances”; rather, it “decides the specific meaning, the essence, of everything by revealing what it really was and is.”¹²⁰ Pannenberg’s future-oriented ontology argues that the future is as “real” as the past and the present, because it has an effect on the present and past as “a reality in its own right.”¹²¹ In Pannenberg’s view, the future is not simply the prisoner of the past and present; it is the reality that “determines” the present as “the field of the possible” and “the basis of the openness of creation to a

¹¹⁷ Mostert, *God and the Future*, 56. See also Wolfhart Pannenberg, “The God of Hope,” in Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, trans. George H. Kehm., 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 2:234-49.

¹¹⁸ See Wolfhart Pannenberg, “Theology and the Kingdom of God, in Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 51-71.

¹¹⁹ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 54.

¹²⁰ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 59, 60.

¹²¹ See Mostert, *God and the Future*, 93.

higher consummation and the source of what is new, i.e., of contingency in each new event.”¹²² Pannenberg’s ontological primacy of the future has its basis in the eternity of God.¹²³ Pannenberg understands eternity “not as timeless, but as [the] infinite unity of life” and, as Mostert notes, for Pannenberg “eternity represents the possibility that finite beings will have their being completed, that all temporal moments participate in eternity, and that the future is to be seen as the source of the wholeness of finite beings.”¹²⁴

Pannenberg’s futuristic ontology helps us to overcome a traditional idea that our existence is an outcome of past events. If we follow this traditional perspective, there is no place for genuine freedom and possibility, in that it sees that antecedent events decide future acts. But, by affirming the primacy of the future, Pannenberg reveals that the future has greater power than the factual, that is, the past, overturning the conventional view that the future is determined by what is actual.¹²⁵ As Mostert mentions, one of the major benefits of Pannenberg’s position is its “emphasis on the openness of being to the new,” and it is true that “to think of human persons as not simply the outcome of their past history but as the anticipation of their future identity” is “immensely liberating,”¹²⁶ in that this perspective enables people to see possibilities and potentialities that can be realized in the future. Because Pannenberg’s ontology of the future originates from his creative understanding of God, we need to spend some time to consider his view of God.

¹²² Here Pannenberg utilizes the concept of the “field,” which is often employed in physics, to discuss the priority of the future. See Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2:97f.

¹²³ See Mostert, *God and the Future*, 104f.

¹²⁴ Mostert, *God and the Future*, 105, 112. On Pannenberg’s understanding of eternity of God, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2: 84-102.

¹²⁵ See Mostert, *God and the Future*, 100-01.

¹²⁶ Mostert, *God and the Future*, 122.

The God of the Future

Pannenberg understands God as the reality that determines everything and as the power of the future. From this premise Pannenberg develops the assertion that the deity of God is manifested in his lordship over all creation. This indicates that, in its relation to an actual reality, the idea of God needs to be understood not only within the framework of human existence, but also it includes “experience of the world as a whole, providing the unity of all reality.”¹²⁷ Thus, for Pannenberg, the task of theology is to demonstrate the truth of the Christian faith for all humankind in that the Christian idea of God illuminates all knowledge.¹²⁸

The understanding of God as future, the coming reign of God, comes from Pannenberg’s intention to provide an adequate framework for exploring the nature of God. In one of his early writings, Pannenberg describes the futurity of God:

[T]he power of the future is simply the way in which God relates himself to time-bound man. . . . God is in himself the power of the future. The reason for this is that the very idea of God demands that there be no future beyond himself. He is the ultimate future. . . . He remains the future of the whole of the past and keeps present to himself his having been the finite future of every finite present which has now become past. Thus he keeps his past creatures in the present of his future.¹²⁹

Here God is depicted as a future reality that is powerful in every present and past event.

In another early writing, Pannenberg describes the God of the Bible as “the God of the promises, as the God who leads history into a new future, and as the God of the coming

¹²⁷ See Grenz, *Reason for Hope*, 7. On Pannenberg’s ontology of the whole, see Mostert, *God and the Future*, 55-88. Pannenberg sees reality as a whole, understanding God as the “all-determining reality.”

¹²⁸ For the public nature of Pannenberg’s theology, see Grenz, *Reason for Hope*, 11-55.

¹²⁹ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 63.

kingdom,” which also indicates God’s character as the future.¹³⁰ Pannenberg sees that this focus on the future was clearly expressed in the life and teaching of Jesus through the proclamation of the immediate kingdom of God. As the power of the future, God came to the world through Jesus Christ, and will be coming to reign over all creation.

It is important to note that, for Pannenberg, the power of the future does not connote the overpowering might of God; it is rather expressed through the power of love, “creative love” which allows new existence and possibility.¹³¹ Only because the rule of God comes in love rather than sheer power can humankind participate in God’s future. There would be no future for us if God were not a loving, reconciling God.¹³² Thus the power of the future does not get rid of our freedom to transcend the current situation. It rather “frees man [*sic*] from his ties to what presently exists in order to liberate him for *his* future, to give him his freedom.”¹³³ For Pannenberg, creation itself has its origin in the divine love,¹³⁴ and the eschatological consummation can be seen as the revelation of the love of God.¹³⁵ Based on God’s creative love, we have courage to participate in God “not by flight from the world but by active transformation of the world which is the expression of the divine love, the power of its future over the present by which it is transformed in the direction of the glory of God.”¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, 2:237.

¹³¹ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 65.

¹³² For a detailed discussion of the love of God, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 1:422-48.

¹³³ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, 2:243. [Emphasis in original.]

¹³⁴ Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, 64-67.

¹³⁵ See Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3:642-46.

¹³⁶ Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, 2:248.

Reason for Hope

Theologian Stanley J. Grenz summarizes Pannenberg's theology in two terms, *reason* and *hope*, in that his theology is an endeavor to provide "the reasonable accounting of the Christian hope, both in the community of faith and in the world."¹³⁷ To offer a rational account of the truth of faith, Pannenberg develops a systematic theology which coheres with all human knowledge, such as science, anthropology, and psychology. Because of the provisionality of human knowledge, which includes truth claims, Pannenberg maintains, all theological assertions need to be tested by means of their coherence with other knowledge. His doctrine of God as the reality that determines everything and as the power of the future is an effort to demonstrate the illuminating power of the Christian concept of God, in conversation with other disciplines.

In addition, as explored earlier, Pannenberg's theology focuses on hope through his assertion of the centrality of eschatology in theology and the ontological primacy of the future. As the power of the future, God's reign, which is already anticipated in Jesus and his ministry, will be completed in the *eschaton*. In the meantime, "as a people of hope whose eyes are directed to the eschatological consummation in the kingdom of God," Grenz asserts, "the Christian community may not retreat into a privatized ghetto of individual or familial piety but is called to remain in the world to give reasonable account of the hope that characterizes its life."¹³⁸ In this sense, Pannenberg's theology is a fascinating and magnificent attempt "to give reason for the hope" (1 Pet. 3:15).

¹³⁷ Grenz, *Reason for Hope*, 9.

¹³⁸ Grenz, *Reason for Hope*, 9.

Toward a Theology of Hope

In this chapter, we have seen that Reformed Christian theology puts hope in the center of its theological inquiry. First of all, as the book of hope, the Bible delivers us significant accounts of hope. In the Old Testament, the God of Israel reveals himself as the originator and the provider of hope through the engagements with human beings. The magnificent Exodus story tells us that God saves his people from oppression, opening a way into the future when it seems there is no way out. Lamentation psalms show us the way in which the sufferer expresses her distress and continues to hope with the conviction that God will intervene to save her. This resilient hope comes from the belief that God provides the newness of the future through his steadfast love and faithfulness to those who await and trust in God. The books of prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, present us the promise and future vision that God reveals to these prophetic “poets” of hopeful imagination in the situation of pain, grief, and hopelessness.

The New Testament is also filled with the accounts of hope, in which the oppressed find freedom, the poor are full, the sick are cured, and the hopeless gain hope. Jesus, the son of God, is represented as the source of hope to the people who are suffering from poverty, marginality, illness, and other predicaments. Jesus’ proclamation of the imminent Kingdom of God provides people the foundation of hopefulness. In this way, hope becomes the central feature of early Christianity. The theme of hope is climaxed in the resurrection of the son of God. While the crucifixion reveals a God who suffers with us, a co-suffering God, the resurrection plays a central role as the ground of Christian hope. In addition, Pauline theology provides a deeper understanding of hope, such as “hope against hope,” “abound in hope,” and “rejoice in your hope.” For Paul, God is the

source and ground of hope, the “God of hope” (Rom 15:13). Seeing hope as a human response to God’s work, Paul relates hope to “unshakable confidence,” “rejoicing,” “steadfast endurance,” “boldness,” “freedom,” “peace,” and “love.”

Two German theologians, Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, provide rich and profound accounts of hope through their grand systematic and/or philosophical theology. Proclaiming the centrality of hope in Christian theology, both articulate an eschatological theology of history. Moltmann claims that hope and the future are the essential theme of Christian faith. According to Moltmann, eschatological hope, a hope for the future, provides the motivation to seek an alternative future to the oppression and suffering of our present time. Moltmann presents a God who provides loving solidarity with the world in its suffering. This God is depicted by Moltmann as the “Coming One,” the “power of a new future.” Pannenberg emphasizes the centrality of eschatology as the starting point of Christian theology. For him, Christian hope is completed in the *eschaton* through God’s rule over all creation. As the power of the future, God reigns over the world in his creative love, inviting people to participate in God’s future.

Based on the theological explorations provided by this chapter, we may be able to summarize important points of Christian theology of hope: (1) hope is a central theme of Christian theology; (2) Christian hope is rooted in a trustworthy and co-suffering God; (3) hope is expressed in the midst of pain, suffering, and oppression; (4) hope demands endurance, waiting, resiliency, and active participation in life; (5) the eschatological vision is an important component of Christian hope; (6) Christian hope is bolstered by the futurity of God. In the next chapter, I turn to the construction of a practical theology of hope based on the examinations so far.

Chapter 5

Toward a Practical Theology of Hope: Hopeful Living

For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

—Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)

Christianity is above all a tradition characterized by hope.

—Richard Bauckham and Trevor Hart, *Hope against Hope*

The primary task of this chapter is to construct a practical theology of hope contextualized in the experience of Korean American Christian immigrants. As an interdisciplinary discipline, practical theology attempts to integrate insight and knowledge gained from the social sciences into Christian theology. Practical theology, unlike other theological disciplines, also emphasizes the importance of human experience as the starting point of its theological reflection. In chapter two, using a qualitative research method, I have provided “thick descriptions” of Korean American experiences in which hope is understood, perceived, lived, and practiced in the lives of research participants. It described how Korean American interviewees maintained hopefulness in the face of marginalization, injustice, and predicament. It also showed how a hopeful attitude helped them to endure the challenges in their lives, and the ways in which they defined hope. Suffering and hope were intertwined in the lives of Koreans, especially through Christian faith which they possessed and had inherited.

Based on these narratives of hope, informed by research participants, this chapter works toward the development of a practical theology of Christian hope that attempts to engage in a dialogue between the empirical data and the resources examined in chapters three and four: the social sciences, the Bible, and Reformed Christian theology. I start

with human and Christian experience voiced by Korean American interviewees, analyze and interpret these experiences using psychosocial and cultural perspectives, and then make a theological reflection on important themes of Christian hope that have been identified through this multidisciplinary work. As stated in chapter one, I am using the revised model of mutual critical correlation for my pastoral theological inquiry. This model endeavors to engage in a mutually constructive critical conversation, but maintains the normative status of Christian theology. I use insights and perspectives from the social sciences, but these resources are under theological control, especially my Reformed theology. From my perspective, this model preserves the theological dimensions of practical theological inquiry and prevents the risk of removing the significance of the reality and revelation of God from practical theological endeavor. Thus, my work involves critical dialogue and mutual reflection, but the conversation is inherently asymmetrical, while prioritizing theology. As the result of this pastoral theological process, I formulate revised forms of practice which are described in the next chapter.

I propose four dimensions of Christian hope, which originate in and/or can be inferred from the lived experience of my research participants: (1) hope as a contributor to resilience; (2) imagination as the promoter of hope; (3) relationality as an essential component of hope; (4) openness to the future as the condition of hope. These four dimensions of hope reveal complicated and nuanced understandings of hope for a marginalized population, such as Korean American immigrants. I focus primarily on salugenic, life- and health- promoting, aspects of hope manifested in these four dimensions of hope contextualized in the Korean American Christian experience. It is important to note that my purpose is not to generalize these dimensions of hope as

distinctively “Korean American” characteristics, because these generalizations are not only undesirable but also unconvincing in our postmodern world.¹ Many people, ethnic groups, and possibly most, if not all, humans, may embrace these characteristics of hope to some degree but also in a different way. Thus, my goal in this chapter is to show a nuanced and contextualized understanding of hope based on the lived experience of the six Korean American Christian immigrants who allowed me to interview them.

Hope as a Contributor to Resilience

In chapter two, I have considered how hope is related to resilience, the ability to get over difficulties, adversity, or misfortune in our lives. Hope is described as a resilient spirit that promotes exuberance, buoyancy, and vitality. Research participants described that, though they had experienced marginality, injustice, and discrimination in their lives, they did not give up hope, overcoming difficulties with a resilient spirit. A hopeful attitude toward life, based on Christian belief, has strengthened interviewees to endure harsh life circumstances in the U.S. Linda, a 36-year-old Korean American female, talks about the relationship between hope and resilience.

For me, hope is like a kind of a pull or power that helps me when I am in difficult situations. . . . I said that hope is the relationship with God, and when I encounter difficulties, I ask God for an answer: “What do you want from me in this situation, Lord? Why do you allow me to suffer from this problem?” God does not respond to me always, but I can get over difficulties, receiving God’s words from time to time. . . . I cannot live without hope. . . . Hope is the power for me to endure difficulties in my life, and without hope, I cannot get through the way. My life in the U.S. is a testing place in that everything that I was used to in Korea has gone. Parents, friends, and other familiar things are gone. I came to the U.S. with my husband. . . . But I was able to make better relationship with my husband, and

¹ See Namsoon Kang, “Who/What Is Asian? A Postcolonial Theological Reading of Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism,” in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2004), 100-17. In this essay, Professor Namsoon Kang, a Korean American feminist theologian, discusses the danger of falling into generalizations. She emphasizes the “hybrid identity” of Asians, and encourages the embracing of “hybrid, decentered, and multiple selves.”

became to love other people. It occurs to me that [living in the U.S.] is a testing place.

Linda's words reflect her pain of leaving Korea and adjusting to the new place, and her strong faith in God helps her to overcome challenges while living in the U.S. Hope based on Christian belief provides her "power" and resiliency to live with these challenges. Other research participants also express the resilient nature of hope: hope provides them an enduring spirit to recover from failure, disappointment, and loss. Chris, a 45-year-old graduate student, mentions, "Hope is a driving force, which helps to overcome challenges and difficulties in our lives." According to Chris, the buoyant spirit he has maintained while living in the U.S. as a "non-resident alien," comes from Christian hope that anticipates the future God will offer.

The social sciences have provided significant evidence in support of the claim that hope promotes a resilient spirit. As explored earlier, psychologists argue that a hopeful mindset helps one to deal with illness, stress, trauma, and other predicaments. Psychologists Averill, Catlin, and Chon claim that hope provides a "sense of coherence" in our lives, which facilitates us to endure difficult situations, such as loss, pain, and disease.² These authors believe that people who have a strong sense of coherence in their experience are more resilient and resistant to illness and other challenging conditions. The individuals who are hopeful endeavor to involve themselves in action that is feasible in order to increase the possibility of better relationships, medical conditions, or successful coping. In this way, a hopeful orientation toward life provides an effective framework to deal with difficult issues in our lives. Thus, it is refreshing to see that

² James R. Averill, G. Catlin, and K. K. Chon, *Rules of Hope*, Recent Research in Psychology (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990), 101-02, citing from A. Antonovsky, *Health, Stress, and Coping* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979), 123.

Averill, Catlin, and Chon conclude their book with a comment that embodies practical theology's interdisciplinary emphasis: "From a social perspective, hope is a command to 'keep the faith,' to remain loyal and committed to action, secure in one's moral righteousness, even when rational considerations and empirical evidence might call for skepticism."³

In their book, *Hope and Hopelessness: Critical Clinical Constructs*, nurse researchers Carol Farran, Kaye Herth, and Judith Popovich claim that hope and hopelessness may impact one's mental and physical health, coping strategies, and quality of life. More specifically, they state, "hope functions as a protective mechanism, whereas the presence of hopelessness on a long-term threatens a person's physical, psychological, and spiritual health and quality of life."⁴ In chapter three, I briefly talked about the relationship between hope and coping; this is an appropriate place to elaborate on this point. According to Farran, Herth, and Popovich, hope is a fundamental construct in the process of coping. They summarize three alternative models to explain hope's association with the coping paradigm: hope as an antecedent to coping; hope as a coping strategy; and hope as the promoter of an outcome of successful coping.⁵

The model that sees hope as an antecedent to coping emphasizes that intrapersonal (for example, trust in others, religious/spiritual beliefs, age, and gender), interpersonal (such as relationships with others, family, and social support systems), and environmental (one's socioeconomic status, etc.) variables influence the ways and degree

³ Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*, 104.

⁴ Carol J. Farran, Kaye A. Herth, and Judith M. Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness: Critical Clinical Constructs* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1995), 39.

⁵ See Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 18-19, 188.

to which an individual has the capacity to be hopeful and to cope with potentially threatening circumstances when experiencing a perceived threat to self and/or goals. In the second model, hope functions as a coping strategy, such as an emotion-focused and problem-solving coping strategy and a method of cognitive appraisal. It is reported that hope is related to “more positive emotion-focused coping strategies, such as making positive comparisons and determining positive value from negative events.” Likewise, hope is associated with more a “realistic, objective process of setting goals and an active, imaginative, and learned process in which the individual maintains a realistic sense of control over time.”⁶ Along with these two coping strategies, hope is utilized as a “process of cognitive reappraisal that is essentially a process of rethinking the feelings, attitude, or approach that one takes toward a particular event or situation.”⁷ For instance, Peggy, a 57-year-old female interviewee who runs a small business, emphasizes the importance of cognitive reappraisal in order to maintain hopefulness. According to Peggy, when you feel hopeless or depressed without any specific reason, if you are able to remember God’s love in your life, you are not easily being discouraged. Through reappraising your thoughts, emotions, and moods, you can be resuscitated. The third model suggests that hope promotes affirmative outcomes, such as improved or altered immune system functioning, more positive feelings, adaptive thoughts and behaviors, and the development of better and enhanced relationships with others and the world.⁸ As Farran, Herth, and Popovich summarize, “hope may influence how the individual perceives a threat to self or goals (Antecedent), enable the individual to appraise the

⁶ Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 18-19.

⁷ Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 19.

⁸ Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 19, 190-91.

situation as challenging as opposed to threatening (Coping Strategy), or help the person to use adaptive tasks and coping strategies that facilitate expanded as opposed to constricted functioning (Outcome).”⁹ Thus, it is safe to say that a hopeful attitude enhances physical and mental health, coping strategies, and quality of life.

Clinical psychologist C. R. Snyder, who has developed a cognitive theory of hope, provides a similar point regarding the significance of hope. Snyder emphasizes the way what he calls “high-hope people” deal with disappointments or difficulties in their goal achievement process. According to Snyder, like low-hope individuals, “high-hopers” also suffer from disappointments in their lives. What differentiates high-hope people from others is their unique “self-referential beliefs.” Through enduring difficult experiences, high-hopers believe that they can learn from and adjust to potential losses and troubles. Because they have “ongoing, positive, internal dialogues of self-statements, such as ‘I can,’ ‘I’ll make it,’ and ‘I won’t give up,’” high-hope individuals are likely to “establish goals for themselves, view obstacles as challenges, and focus on successes rather than failures.”¹⁰ In addition, though goal blockages produce negative emotional responses for everyone, high-hope people show less negative emotional reactions compared to their low-hope counterparts. In other words, high-hopers are good at finding alternative paths to their original goals, while low-hope people are unsure about how to achieve their goals and are often confused when their goals are blocked.¹¹ Furthermore, high-hopers are flexible and creative with regard to their goal achievements. When the

⁹ Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness*, 18.

¹⁰ See Alicia Rodriguez-Hanley and C. R. Snyder, “The Demise of Hope: On Losing Positive Thinking,” in *Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, & Applications*, ed. C. R. Snyder (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000), 40. See also C. R. Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get There from Here* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 5-12.

¹¹ Rodriguez-Hanley and Snyder, “The Demise of Hope,” 40.

original goal is unattainable, they try to find alternative goals that are achievable, and in the passage of their lives, they attempt to set multiple goals that can be pursued in various life situations. High hopers' flexible, multifaceted, and hopeful attitude contributes not only to their psychological well-being but also to the promotion of the resilient spirit.

As an example, consider the life of Andy, a 64-year-old male interviewee who immigrated to the U.S. in 1973 right after graduating from college in Korea, majoring in electrical engineering. He and his wife decided to come to the U.S. because it was hard to get a job in Korea at that time, because of the nation's poor economic situation. When he and his wife arrived in the U.S., they had only 100 dollars in their wallet. (It was also difficult to bring money from Korea to other countries because there was a restriction in carrying money outside of Korea.) However, Andy stated that "at the arrival in the L.A. airport, I had a very good feeling and felt comfortable, without fear. I talked to myself to start a new life in the U.S. with diligence and hope." With help of relatives living in the L.A. area, he began to work in a gas station no later than two weeks after his arrival. Since that day, Andy confessed, he has not stopped working, except a few brief occasions (a short visit to Korea in 1974; participation in graduation ceremonies of his three children; and a visit to Korea in 2002). He worked in the gas station for about three months, was employed in an electronic company for two years, and then in another electronic company for four years. Though he felt wages were unfair, he did not complain; instead Andy gave thanks for his work, as he was not a U.S. citizen and had limited skill in the English language. Afterward, Andy spent four years as a taxi driver and, then, purchased a liquor store and ran it for twenty years. Throughout his life, Andy attempted to find multiple pathways to achieve his goal to live in the U.S. and did not

complain or show discontentment regarding his situation. Rather, he was very flexible and creative in choosing jobs. Of course, he felt disappointments and difficulties in his life. His hard work allowed him to afford a house in a good community, but because of an economic crisis in the early 1990s in the U.S., his family lost the house and he had to dispose of the liquor store. Andy had to move to another house in a different community and sold his store. Though it was painful, Andy said, “I am still rich, as compared to early immigration years” (“less negative emotional reactions”). While the situation of his liquor store was getting worse, he started to attend a church where his wife already had attended, and his newly-earned Christian faith became one of the most important parts of his life. In sum, the flexibility, hopefulness, and multiple options in vocation helped Andy to get over difficulties and disappointments, and to maintain him to be a “high-hoper” throughout his life.

Christian theology provides us a view in which hope takes a form of the resilient spirit that helps to overcome loss, failure, and despair. Hope described in the Bible is not naïve optimism or false dreams, which are not based on reality in our lives, but it is a realistic and resilient way of experiencing the world amid difficulties, suffering, and pain. Biblical hope is not built upon a “care-free” condition or an “all-perfect” situation, but usually develops out of a situation where there seems to be no way out. As explored in chapter three, Christian existentialist Marcel highlights the point that hope develops from our experience of hurt, suffering, and calamity and, thereby, requires patience, modesty, and humility. Hope is a response to felt tragedy and the positive outgrowth of a tragic sense of life. From this point of view, we can see that Christian hope demands the spirit of resilience, endurance, and perseverance. It should be mentioned, however, that

biblical accounts of hope are rooted in a theology that assumes the existence of a God who is loving, willing to intervene, and trustworthy. Without the recognition of the reality of the divine, Christian hope would not be possible and not strong enough to tolerate human predicament. This understanding of hope is well presented by Chris, who talked about the circumstance of hopefulness and his belief in a loving God. According to Chris, hope comes out of a situation where “there is no way out, blocked by a huge wall” in his life. After completing his Masters of Theology degree, he planned to enter a doctoral program. With the status of Optional Practical Training (OPT), which allowed him to stay in the U.S for about an year, he studied for the General Record Exam (GRE) to improve his chances of getting accepted into a Ph.D. program. However, the test result was disappointing, so he was worried. If he was not able to get a better GRE score, he would have to return to Korea. He felt that he reached an impasse. In this situation, however, Chris confessed that he did seek God more earnestly because he believed that nobody could help him. Chris mentioned, “When there is nothing to rely on, though sometimes you may be stricken with despair, you attempt to grasp the rope of hope more eagerly.” Hope developed from his experience of despair, hurt, and predicament. In addition, strong faith in God who would lead him with his unfailing love provided him courage to keep hopeful.

In the Old Testament, we find “resilient hope” in various contexts. One example is found in the lamentation psalms. In the face of suffering, the psalmist does not fall into despair or dismay at the dreadful situation he or she encounters. Rather, the psalmist laments the situation and anticipates God’s intervention and salvation, without giving up hope. Even in the situation where the cries are left unanswered, the psalmist continues to

hope and address God. Resilience may suggest a “passive” mode of behavior, for it is usually related to the attitudes of patience, endurance, and humility. However, resilience is actually an “active” way of dealing with difficulties in our lives. For instance, the ability to articulate complaints or desires to God in a situation of frustration, threat, or limitation, is an *active* means to express our concerns and needs when we cope with anxiety, disappointment, and other negative situations in our lives. Brueggemann has emphasized the importance of expressing the emotion of grief and despair in the midst of suffering. It is because, according to Brueggemann, the “specific, concrete expression of despair” creates the “rhetorical, psychological, theological possibility of hope.”¹² When the grief is not expressed in a productive way, it may become destructive rage which would hinder the possibility and development of hope.¹³ The utterance of grief becomes the seed of hope and helps one to move on past hurt to buoyancy. In a sense, expressing complaints, grief, and agony is an active way of practicing resilience in our lives.

The life of the prophet Jeremiah shows what resilient hope looks like. In the act and behavior of Jeremiah, we see the practice of “resilient hope.” Jeremiah, a prophet who lived in a critical moment of Israelite history, experiences tremendous pain and distress related to the fall of Jerusalem and, accordingly, his nation. Though filled with grief and sorrow, Jeremiah maintains to “speak a true word of hope at the point of genuine nullity.”¹⁴ How can Jeremiah keep hoping in the presence of the destruction of the nation? Because he had resilient hope, rooted in the vision of God who promises newness out of nothing: the renewal and the restoration of Israel. “Jeremiah believes,”

¹² Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones*, 187.

¹³ Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones*, 187.

¹⁴ Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 29.

says Brueggemann, “that God is able to do an utterly new thing which violates our reason, our control, and our despair.”¹⁵ Jeremiah 32:1-15 tells of an incident where Jeremiah buys a portion of land following the command of God. It is not guaranteed for Jeremiah to be able to own the land because of the given situation: he is in prison, the Babylonian armies have besieged the city of Jerusalem, and Israel is about to collapse. But the prophet Jeremiah accepts the command of God despite the current circumstances.

As every hope dwindles, he [Jeremiah] purchases a piece of land for the future. He puts himself on the record as a hoper against circumstances. The basis for his action is an unprovable, unmeasured word that there will be a future underived from the present. This is incredible buoyancy, in which everything depends on the free word of God that is not supported by any visible prop. It takes enormous chutzpah to act in a concrete way toward the future when it is clear that the known present is about to end.¹⁶

Though the prophet is keenly aware of what is going on in the world around him (the present situation), he takes courage to follow the command of God because he is confident that everything is possible in God, who creates a future out of a hopeless present. Jeremiah knew that the present situation could not control the future God would offer. Keeping the vision rooted in the promise of God, Jeremiah was able to maintain hopefulness in the very midst of hopelessness and despair. This resilient hope works because of God’s true intention for newness: “For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

This remarkable dimension of hope provides us an important point when we construct a Christian practical theology of hope. As Chris mentions, hope does not come from “an individual’s ability, personality, and ambition,” but from “the promise of God.”

¹⁵ Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, 29-30.

¹⁶ Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones*, 183.

Even though social contexts and our environments impact the way in which we perceive hope, Christian hope is not based on the current situation: it is ultimately a hope rooted in a God who promises the newness of the future through his unfailing love and faithfulness. This element of hope differentiates Christian hope from other types of hope. Resilient hope sprouts from the belief that God cares, loves, and intervenes in our fragmented and fragile lives. What would happen to the caregiving ministry if caregivers and counselors are attentive to the true intention of God—the newness of the future—in the midst of the shambles of broken marriages, failed relationships, and troubled faith? In the next chapter, I endeavor to find ways how it can be incorporated into our ministry of pastoral care and counseling.

Imagination as the Promoter of Hope

The link between imagination and hope was explored in the previous chapters. We have seen that hope requires the capacity to *imagine* the possibilities for the future. Hope, in large part, depends upon the gift of imagination. The experience of my research participants show that imagination is an important part of the process of hoping and helps to anticipate things that do not exist yet. Through the act of imagination, we create new possibilities for the future, generate different perspectives, and visualize a better reality. Helen, a 63-year-old Korean female interviewee, uses imagination as an activity of her everyday life. In her work place, she envisages certain expectations and hopes which are related to her job as the owner of a laundry business. From her personal experience, she knows that this type of anticipation can be actualized as a reality. For instance, she often finds specific customers to come to her store as she imagines. Yet she emphasizes that it is not a superstition, but an anticipation of deep desire in her heart. Helen utilizes the

power of the mind's eye in raising her children, envisioning a future for them. She believes that imagination is a way of prayer, though not "formal," in that she draws a clear image in her mind that may be answered by God. Both Andy and Harry, a 68-year-old male interviewee who is retired, also use imagination as a way of maintaining hopefulness in their life. Through imagination, they anticipate a better future for their family and a life that is worth living. Imagining a better future enables Andy to deal with challenges in his life, and his vision to live an "honest" life makes Harry to follow a life which appreciates justice, kindness, and integrity.

In his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist and a Holocaust survivor, shares his experience in a Nazi concentration camp and describes how he was able to sustain hope in the midst of total devastation and brokenness. Frankl states that a "rich intellectual life" helped him to overcome the harsh environment in the concentration camp.¹⁷ Frankl used imagination in order to create for himself a rich intellectual life, even in those horrific circumstances: Herbert points out that Frankl often pictured himself in the "future standing in a warm and comfortable room giving a lecture to an attentive audience about his experiences of the concentration camp."¹⁸ Imagining the future which does not yet exist but is possible to attain enabled Frankl to get through the immediate situation and empowered him to see the future in a creative way. "By this method" Frankl asserts, "I succeeded somehow in rising above the situation, above the sufferings of the moment, and I observed them as if they were already of the past. Both I and my troubles became the object of an interesting

¹⁷ Viktor Emil Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*, trans. Ilse Lasch, 4th ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 35.

¹⁸ Russell Herbert, *Living Hope: A Practical Theology of Hope for the Dying* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2006), 35.

psychoscientific study undertaken by myself.”¹⁹ The process of imagination provided Frankl the ability to envision the future that is coming to him as a reality. As Herbert rightly observes, however, Frankl did not disregard or escape from the present reality but attempted to use imagination as a constructive way in which his situation became the material for the construction of his imaginative vision.²⁰

As explored in chapter three, Lynch emphasizes the significance of imagination as the essential constituent of the hoping process. Lynch asserts that “hope imagines,” “refuses to stop imagining (or hypothesizing),” and “is always imagining what is not yet seen, or a way out of difficulty, or a wider perspective for life or thought.”²¹ As the “gift that envisions what cannot yet be seen,” imagination enables hope to envision “reality” differently than in the state of hopelessness, creating a new sense of possibility.²² However, for Lynch, imagination is not a mysterious concept, but a creative quality that is rooted in reality. Different from fantasy, which represents the unrealistic wishing driven by absolutizing instinct, hopeful imagination is the “realistic and human imagination” and plays an important role as the “enemy of human illness.”²³ Lynch’s notion of realistic imagination resonates with the perspective of the research participant Helen. Helen sees her imagination not as a mysterious or “superstitious” phenomenon, but as a realistic way of envisioning the future. Her anticipation is based on previous

¹⁹ Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 73-74. Cited in Herbert, *Living Hope*, 35.

²⁰ Herbert, *Living Hope*, 36.

²¹ William F. Lynch, *Images of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless* (New York: New American Library, 1966), 19.

²² Lynch, *Images of Hope*, 27.

²³ It needs to be noted that theologian Jürgen Moltmann understands fantasy differently from Lynch. For Moltmann, fantasy does not mean unrealistic wishes but the creative imagination by which a future is anticipated. Productive fantasy has a liberating power in human life. In a sense, Moltmann’s view of fantasy resembles Lynch’s view of wishing.

experiences in her life and belief in God who meets her sincere needs. For Helen, imagination is a gift to see possibilities in the future in advance.

It should be noted that imagination is a crucial theological component of hope, which complements the importance given to the use of the imagination in the hoping process in the social sciences, such as psychology. In chapter four, I talked about hopeful imagination delivered by such prophets as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah. These prophets proclaim messages from God, who provides the qualitatively new future in the midst of hopelessness, brokenness, and pain. Jeremiah foresees a new covenant which is “not like” the Sinai covenant (31:31-32). Jeremiah’s imagination is independent from the present situation, because for him the new world and the new covenant are a gift from God, who acts in “unqualified freedom.”²⁴ The new heart and new spirit, which Ezekiel anticipates God to give to his people, are as different from their old counterparts as flesh from stone (11:19; 18:31; 36:26). The later chapters of Isaiah (40-66) are filled with hopeful imagination about what will be attained in the future. These prophetic images of hope in Isaiah reveal the “unprecedented act of salvation for his people that God is going to perform.”²⁵ Although the prophet recalls the “memories” in the past of Israel history, in which God showed his remarkable redemption, Isaiah declares the radical nature of the newness God offers through his prophecies. The language of unprecedented newness in Isaiah, thus, suggests an eschatological connotation that “this world and its history will be brought to its proper end and thereby transformed into something wholly new.”²⁶

²⁴ Brueggemann, *Like Fire in the Bones*, 182.

²⁵ Bauckham and Hart, *Hope against Hope*, 78.

²⁶ Bauckham and Hart, *Hope against Hope*, 79.

In their book *Hope against Hope: Christian Eschatology in Contemporary Context*, Bauckham and Hart emphasize the eschatological nature of hope in its relation to imagination. According to them, “Christian hope . . . is not imaginary, but it is irreducibly imaginative.”²⁷ Lamenting over a “cultural loss of future in the present,” Bauckham and Hart declare the importance of “the hope in God for the whole of God’s creation.” For them, Christian hope is “hope against hope” in that it is “hope in the transcendent possibilities of God the Creator who gives his creation future, against hope in the merely immanent possibilities of human history that now threaten the future as much as they promise to create it.”²⁸ According to Bauckham and Hart, the problem of contemporary society is not the lack of imagination but its misuse, an inclination to retreat into a private dimension of life (through cyberspace, for example) focusing on the present without engaging in the “real” future. In this way, postmodern imagination tends to become “individualistic fantasy,” which has “no aspirations to transcendence, no forward moving and potentially liberating direction.”²⁹ Against the postmodern use of imagination that hinders real hope, these authors call for the Christian eschatological vision, a “vision of a meaningful and hopeful future for the world, a meaning which could never be had by extrapolating the circumstances of the tragic drama of history itself.”³⁰ The eschatological nature of imagination is expressed by two research participants. Helen imagines an eschatological future where there are “no tears and sighs.” This eschatological vision provides Helen courage to live in this world with hope. Peggy

²⁷ Bauckham and Hart, *Hope against Hope*, xii.

²⁸ Bauckham and Hart, *Hope against Hope*, xi.

²⁹ Bauckham and Hart, *Hope against Hope*, 58-59.

³⁰ Bauckham and Hart, *Hope against Hope*, 51.

also lives with eschatological hope in which she anticipates to “meet God who loves [her] so much” in heaven. Though they do not disregard living in the world as trivial or insignificant, both agree that the future comes with the radical newness offered by God in the *eschaton*.

For Moltmann, imagining in hope is the heart of doing theology. In *The Coming of God*, Moltmann states that theology is “*imagination for the kingdom of God* in the world, and for the world in God’s kingdom.”³¹ Elsewhere, Moltmann describes the role of imagination in his theology: “Theology always includes the imagination, fantasy for God and his Kingdom. If we were to ban the images of the imagination from theology, we should be robbing it of its best possession. Eschatologically-oriented theology is dependent on a messianic imagination of the future, and sets this imagination free.”³² As I have pointed out earlier, we need to be careful to see what Moltmann means by “fantasy” or wishing, in that fantasy and wishing can be understood as, and function as a poor psychological substitute for, hoping. For Moltmann, fantasy has constructive meanings. Moltmann asserts that since the Enlightenment, which emphasized the rational ability of human beings, fantasy has been regarded a “more primitive intellectual process” than rationality.³³ Moltmann notes, however, that while Immanuel Kant considered all metaphysical speculations as “dreams of a visionary,” putting reason in the limits of possible experience, he emphasized the importance of imagination. In addition, Moltmann points out, Romantics admired fantasy as an expression of practical reason in

³¹ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, xiv. [Emphasis in original.]

³² Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1985), 4. Cited in Herbert, *Living Hope*, 187.

³³ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 22.

that it “makes present what is still absent, visualizes the ideal, and places the spirit in that freedom which carries it far beyond every authority and limitation.”³⁴ Because of its liberating power, Moltmann regards fantasy as “productive,” which enables us to “anticipate the still unrealized future in order to anticipate and shape it in thought and pictures.”³⁵ Criticizing the fact that realists may denounce fantasy as unrealistic wishful thinking, Moltmann underlines the fact that wishing plays an important role in the imaginative process of hoping.

In this sense, Moltmann seems to agree with Lynch who also sees wishing as a central source of hope. Moltmann’s intention is to rediscover the place of productive fantasy and meaningful wishing in our pursuit of hope. Against both Feuerbach and Freud, Moltmann believes that productive fantasy works constructively with projections and illusions. This is because projections are “in no way merely compensations for disappointed and suffered reality” but are “projections into a possible but yet unknown future,” which are “stimulated by objective new possibilities.” In the same way, illusions are “in no way merely mental gratifications of repressed wishes,” but “a mental form coordinating and presenting itself in representations of the not-yet-realized future,” which is closer to the meaning of the word illusion in its Latin origin—“preludes, overtures to the future.”³⁶ Thus, for Moltmann, creative imagination that comes from productive fantasy and meaningful wishing becomes the fundamental element of hoping. This resonates with Moltmann’s conviction that the category of possibility has a higher value

³⁴ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 23.

³⁵ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 23.

³⁶ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 24.

than the category of reality.³⁷ As an example, consider the hopes of Chris. His legal status in the U.S. is that he has an F1 visa, which allows him to stay while studying in this country. So he imagines how to continue to stay after his study. One way is to obtain the right of permanent resident through working in a church as a fulltime pastor. Another is for his oldest son, a college student, who has a U.S. citizenship, to invite his family into the U.S. These two ways are only possibilities that might be realized, but they are not certainties. But Chris projects his hopes into a possible but yet unknown future and presents them in representations of the not-yet-realized future. In this sense, his hopes belong to creative imagination which goes with productive fantasy and meaningful wishing.

In our exploration of hope with regard to imagination, we clearly see that hope and imagination are not separable, but are deeply intertwined. To be hopeful means to be imaginative. Thus, a Christian practical theology of hope contextualized in the experience of Korean American immigrants needs to incorporate imagination into the hoping process. As a way of seeing the future in advance, imagination strengthens the process of hoping. Theologically, the capacity to imagine for the future is based on a God who wants to give us “a future and a hope” rather than “evil” (Jeremiah 29:11). Imagination is not a useless or unproductive thinking process; it is more likely a gift from God who, through imagination, provides opportunities and possibilities in situations of despair, failure, and pain. In the next chapter, we will consider ways in which pastoral caregivers and religious leaders in the community can cultivate an ongoing awareness of the importance of imagination and encourage people to use imaginative power as a means of promoting hope.

³⁷ Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 25.

Relationality as an Essential Component of Hope

In chapter two, I briefly talked about hope in its association with relationships, emphasizing that, as a relational experience, hope is developed and nurtured through interactions with others. The interviewees revealed that hope is not shaped through isolation, but through social interactions with family members, friends, church, and God. They have highlighted the significance of parental influence in its formation of the hopeful self, especially the mother-child relationship. Interpersonal relationships with others, such as their spouses, friends, and church members, were also among their main sources of hopefulness. In addition, church creates an important environment in which hopefulness is nurtured. As a spiritual community of mutual support and love, church plays a pivotal role for the promotion of hope through the religious practices such as worship, preaching, prayers, scriptural readings and meditations, and Bible studies. Needless to say, their relationship with God provides a foundational basis in which hope is understood, experienced, and practiced in the lives of my interviewees. In this section, I will elaborate on the relational nature of hope to construct a practical theology of hope for Korean Americans.

As discussed in chapter three, Erikson proposes that hope, as a basic human strength, derives from human relationship, primarily from the infant-mother interaction. As a “coherent being and object,” a mothering person provides the basis of hope through the interactions between the child and its mother, which may impact the way in which the child perceives self and the world. Erikson notes, however, that when the child grows, she or he is no longer confined to mother-child relationships. Now the child can embrace the whole environment as a place for hope, a shift made possible by autonomy. With the

development of the autonomous self, emphasizes Erikson, hope is transformed into an attitude or spirit of hopefulness independent of specific hopes. Here I want to talk about the relationship between autonomy and dependency. In infancy, dependency is necessary to survive, but the child cannot grow healthy without having autonomy. While dependency provides an individual safety and security, autonomy brings the ability to do something independently, the ability to make choices and act on one's desires. Thus, the proper balance of autonomy and dependency is essential to a healthy development of an individual.

Lynch, who emphasizes the importance of imagination in the process of hoping, talks about a mutual aspect of hope. He writes,

Hope cannot be achieved alone. It must in some way or other be an act of a community, whether the community be a church or a nation or just two people struggling together to produce liberation in each other. People develop hope in each other, hope that they will receive help from each other.

We often think that imagination is a "private" act, but it can also be a "common act of *imagining with*." Lynch argues that "what happens in despair is that the private imagination, of which we are so enamored, reaches the point of the end of inward resource. . . ." People suffering despair are often stuck in a constricted imagination. Thus, therapeutic work may be understood, according to Lynch, as a cooperative process in which the caregiver attempts to help the careseeker to imagine what she cannot imagine by herself.³⁸ In this way, therapeutic relationship promotes the possibilities of imagination through mutual interactions.

In his emphasis on mutuality in human relationships, however, Lynch provides an important point, suggesting a "double need of autonomy and belonging." Lynch's point

³⁸ Lynch, *Images of Hope*, 19. All the quotations in this paragraph are found on the same page.

is vital because, if we admit that hope develops through interactions with others, to establish mutual, healthy relationships is pivotal. Not every relationship promotes hopefulness and, in fact, some relationships, such as those that are abusive, violent, or neglectful, damage our capacity to be hopeful. To develop a healthy relationship, it is important to balance between independence and dependence. It is “when either autonomy or dependence is absolutized that an unhealthy defiance or slavish obedience is created,” and “so both need to be held in equilibrium.”³⁹

Russell Herbert comments that the right balance of autonomy and dependence is essential to a healthy sense of community. Herbert argues that “the experience of friendship in community is one of being supported by others.”⁴⁰ Dependence is a way of receiving “something” from others, such as care, help, and assistance. Even though Herbert talks about it in the context of palliative care, this can be applied to overall pastoral care practice. “Listening,” “being there,” or “sharing” are aspects of the profound ministry of care offered through relationships. Herbert warns, however, that the “willingness to accept help and support from others” needs to go with the awareness of the importance of “personal *autonomy*.”⁴¹ Without having autonomy, we are inclined to over-dependency, which is “unhelpful, for it upsets the necessary balance with autonomy that is central to real hope.”⁴² Lynch points out the “destructive” nature of dependence:

³⁹ Herbert, *Living Hope*, 29. All the quotations are found on the same page.

⁴⁰ Herbert, *Living Hope*, 170-71.

⁴¹ Herbert, *Living Hope*, 171.

⁴² Herbert, *Living Hope*, 171, 30. Capps discusses the importance of autonomy for the development of hope, and he sees autonomy as a crucial part of the process of establishing relationships of trust in that autonomy is based on a “firmly developed trust.” Capps argues that true relatedness is, in a sense, our capacity to be alone, the capacity to internalize the “absent other” in our mind. For instance, though the mother is absent, a hopeful child can keep the image of her mother inside her, whereby she

Sometimes “help” is more destructive than creative. Sometimes it is outright interference. Too often it is an attempt to make us more dependent than ever. This is certainly one of the keys to the nature of neurotic friendships and love. What the giver is really saying is: I will help you if you consent to needing me. I will help you in order that and if you will love or serve me.⁴³

This has important implications for the way pastoral caregivers might perceive their role in care. It is extremely important to establish a trustful pastoral relationship with careseekers. Pastoral presence, attentive listening, and honest and considerate response are part of key elements to create a basic companionship. However, there is always a danger for caregivers to become overprotective. Bruce Rumbold warns of the temptation for caregivers to adopt a “mothering attitude,” which might be helpful for a short-term period. But, in the long run, this attitude is not beneficial either to caregivers or careseekers because of its unbalanced relationship in which caregivers may “lock into a mothering stance” that downgrades the therapeutic relationship to one between adult (caregiver) and child (careseeker).⁴⁴ This type of relationship is not only undesirable but also destructive.

I have argued above that hope is an act of a community. In the context of Korean American Christian experience, a faith community, especially the church, has an important role to nurture hope. In chapter two, I talked about the central role immigrant ethnic churches have played in the Korean American community. These faith communities have provided not only religious space for the practice of faith and

“feels related” to her mother even though she is not there. Autonomy, in its association with relationship, is thus the ability to imagine possibilities and make choices for herself. In a communal sense, as Herbert states, autonomy can be seen as “a sense of belongingness to community that has been internalized.” See Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 45-51; Herbert, *Living Hope*, 172.

⁴³ Lynch, *Images of Hope*, 36.

⁴⁴ Bruce D. Rumbold, *Helplessness and Hope: Pastoral Care in Terminal Illness* (London: SCM Press, 1986), 10-11. Cited in Herbert, *Living Hope*, 171.

spirituality, but they also have offered racial-ethnic space in which Koreans find their social identity, ethnic legacy, and cultural heritage reinforced. The significance of a faith community for Korean Americans cannot be overemphasized. This means that the church is a *strategic* place to nurture hope. It needs to be mentioned, however, that the church, at least the “visible” church, can be a place and a community that discourages hope, due to its own limitations as a human congregation in the world. The church is not a “perfect” or “intact” community, in that it is only a mirror of the “invisible” church which will be established in the *eschaton*. Consider Korean ethnic churches in the U.S. Though it is true that the Korean American church has played a major role by providing religious and racial-ethnic space for Korean Americans, these churches can hamper the promotion of hope for certain groups in church, such as women, younger generations, and those of lower socioeconomic status. Influenced by the Confucian ideal that emphasizes “harmony” in the family and social relationships, those groups of people are underrepresented, oppressed, and are not adequately treated, not only within their families and communities, but also within churches.⁴⁵ As a community of hope, church thus needs to be aware of the possibility of discouraging hope and endeavor to create a hope-inspiring faith community through constructing just relations.

However, I still believe that church can be a place where a broken hope is restored, failed dreams are renewed, and frustrated imagination is reworked. As Lester mentions, “Hope is nurtured in relationship, hence related of necessity to community, particularly

⁴⁵ For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng, “Pastoral Care in the Context of North American Asian Communities,” in *Injustice and the Care of Souls: Taking Oppression Seriously in Pastoral Care*, ed. Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen Brown Montagno (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 78-82. The Asian theologian and Christian educator Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng discusses the reality of tensions and injustice within Asian North American communities, including Korean churches and communities, and provides appropriate pastoral responses for these important issues.

the community of faith.”⁴⁶ In Christian community, we may learn to hope through trusting others, sharing visions of the future, and experiencing mutual love and intimacy. In particular, the church can reach out to people who have minimum hope, providing a “surrogate family that accepts the hopeless into an intimate fellowship and cares for them in ways that awaken hope.”⁴⁷ In this way, the church can be an extending community to the world and provides a relational network to produce hope. Consider, again, Korean American churches for this possibility. Many Korean ethnic churches, if not all, nowadays endeavor to reach out to their communities to share not only the Christian gospel but also the love of God. Some churches offer free meals for the homeless every weekend and send volunteers to nursing homes, retirement facilities, and prisons to help them to meet their basic needs, such as companionship, necessary assistance, and food. Other Korean churches attempt to reach out to other undeveloped countries, such as Mexico, Peru, and Chile, providing social services, such as building houses, offering summer classes, and mission outreach. These are examples of just a few of the ways that the church can offer itself as God’s community of hope. Through these activities, people who are being helped might be able to regain their hopes, have an opportunity to develop good relationships, and find a seed of hope planted in their hearts.

In a theological sense, as Carl Braaten maintains, the church has an eschatological nature. According to Braaten, the church is “on the way,” anticipating the future, and it is an “eschatological community of hope that exists for the world.”⁴⁸ In a similar way,

⁴⁶ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 98.

⁴⁷ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 98.

⁴⁸ Carl E. Braaten, *The Future of God: The Revolutionary Dynamics of Hope* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 111, 109. Cited in Herbert, *Living Hope*, 165.

Moltmann sees the Christian community as the “messianic community” in which eschatological hope is experienced. Thus, for Moltmann, the church is the “fellowship of hope.” As the community “on the way,” the Christian church lives in “hopeful anticipation of God’s resurrection promise.”⁴⁹ As Lester expresses it, “The church is a community of believers that is both experiencing and expecting God’s kingdom. This anticipation is celebrated in the sacraments, which give shape to the present as well as the future.”⁵⁰ In this way, the Christian community becomes a community of hope for the future.

From these discussions of the relational nature of hope, we may conclude that we need relationships, social interaction, and community, if hope is to take root in us. A Christian practical theology of hope for Korean Americans thus includes relationality as a crucial aspect of the hoping process. This dimension of hope has tremendous implications not only for human relationships in general but also for therapeutic relationships in particular. When I offer suggestions and guidelines for care and counseling in chapter six, I will consider the relational dimension of hope as an important part of therapeutic work. In addition, in constructing a practical theology of hope, I have noted that the faith community plays a significant role in Korean Americans’ lives, so that caregivers and religious leaders need to be mindful of its place and responsibility. As a locus of sharing relationships, Christian community has a pivotal role in creating and nurturing hope.

⁴⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 122. Cited in Herbert, *Living Hope*, 165.

⁵⁰ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 98.

Openness to the Future as the Condition of Hope

Another important dimension of hope voiced by my research participants is the awareness of the future as the condition of hope. Helen often utilizes the power of imagination to envision the future she anticipates. She talks about the importance of the future as the source of her hope: “My root of hope comes from the conviction that I will go to heaven when I die. There are no tears and sighs in heaven. No matter how difficult it is to live in this world, I have a place to go later.” The future she imagines is related to an eschatological vision. Peggy also expresses her desire and hope for the future in this way: “My hope is, after I die, to meet God who loves me so much.” Andy confesses that one of main resources, which have helped him to overcome injustice in his work place, was his open-minded personality to see the future with anticipation. He did not engage in grumbling or complaint, and instead he gave thanks for the chance to work, and maintained hopefulness. Hope is deeply related to a future perspective. People who are hoping are often future-oriented and open-minded, envisioning their future in a creative way, while not ignoring their past experiences and endeavoring to enjoy the very moments of the present. Thus, the future perspective plays an important role in the hoper’s life.

Pastoral theologian Andrew Lester has emphasized the significant role that the future tense plays in human existence. He argues that the future tense grants to the present tense the gift of possibility, and makes our past meaningful and intelligible. In relation to hoping, Lester points out that hope, though rooted in the past and acted out in the present, receives its energy from the future.⁵¹ Utilizing the insights of existential

⁵¹ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 11-26.

thinkers such as Paul Tillich, Ernst Bloch, and psychotherapist Irvin Yalom, as well as Moltmann's theology, Lester states that "hope is empowered from the future from where it receives its vision."⁵² Lester particularly highlights the importance of what he calls "future stories," because he believes that the way a person thinks about and feels toward the future and its stories determines one's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.⁵³ Future stories, or a future perspective, can shape our lives in various ways—negative or positive—depending on our attitudes toward the future.

In a theological sense, hope can be described, according to Lester, as "a person's trusting anticipation of the future based on an understanding of a God who is trustworthy and who calls us into an open-ended future."⁵⁴ The God in this understanding provides us a future filled with possibilities and blessings, by keeping his promises of liberation, deliverance, and salvation. Furthermore, theologically, hope is related to our experience of the future in a way in which we experience God's grace and benevolence through participating in the future God offers. In this sense, our ultimate foundation of hope, if we follow the tradition of Christian theology, is rooted in the character of God, who is loving and trustworthy, and in Jesus Christ, who is the "visible expression of God's faithfulness to our relationship," giving us "reason to hope for the not-yetness of our future."⁵⁵

One of the strengths in Lester's understanding of hope is that it helps us to place it in relation to theological underpinnings, though he is using primarily existential

⁵² Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 22.

⁵³ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 59.

⁵⁴ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 62.

⁵⁵ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 65-66.

theologies to make his argument. Hope is not only a developmental human virtue or an existential life dynamic; it is also a theologically significant entity because of its roots in the divine story. Furthermore, Lester's emphasis on "future stories" or a future perspective, gives us a sense that the future fosters our attitude toward life. In a sense, our ability to hope is cultivated primarily by participating in our not-yet moment—which is the future, and is, as Lester describes it, "the most authentic and distinctive characteristic of humanity."⁵⁶

I have mentioned that, theologically, hope involves anticipation of the future God offers. The future is filled with possibilities because it is an unknown territory for humans due to its not-yetness, though our fragmented past often restricts our chance to imagine a future good.⁵⁷ These possibilities, however, are often directed toward "what is not yet visible," an expectation we do not see now (cf. Rom. 8:24-25). The hoper does not aim for "the reality which exists, but the reality which is coming," and does not "seek to make a mental picture of existing reality, but to lead existing reality toward the promised and hoped-for transformation."⁵⁸ Thus, hopefulness is not based on present experiences, but on the possibility of new experience the future offers. Moltmann aptly articulates this point: "hopes and anticipations of the future are not a transfiguring glow superimposed upon a darkened existence, but are realistic ways of perceiving the scope of our real possibilities, and as such they set everything in motion and keep it in a state of

⁵⁶ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 59.

⁵⁷ Good examples of experiences that can limit the possibility of anticipating a future good would abuse, domestic violence, and other types of persecution and injustice.

⁵⁸ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 18.

change.”⁵⁹ The foundation of hope is a benevolent God who creates novelty out of nothing, who “gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist” (Rom. 4:17).

A future good that hope anticipates is, however, often difficult to attain because it needs the “true dynamic of human striving” and “the patient but tenacious pursuit of the good.”⁶⁰ Thus, the fulfillment of hope requires an attitude of waiting, endurance, and patience. At the same time, it is not impossible to attain because of its openness to the future: “the world is filled with all kinds of possibilities, namely all the possibilities of the God of hope.”⁶¹ The attainability of a future good is possible because of a benevolent God who is the ‘God of hope’ (Rom. 15:13) with “future as his essential nature,” who “encounters us in his promises for the future” and comes to us as a novel possibility.⁶² The God of hope makes all things new (Rev. 21:5), and because of this word of promise, people gain courage to pursue their goals, freedom to renew their life, and motive to change the face of the world.⁶³

As discussed in chapter four, Pannenberg understands the future as different from conventional thought in which the future is only an extension of the past and the present. Unlike this traditional perspective, Pannenberg sees the future as determinative of both the past and the present. It is so because the future kingdom of God impacts the way we understand our present and even our past. As the power of the future, God comes from

⁵⁹ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 25.

⁶⁰ Macquarrie, *Christian Hope*, 9.

⁶¹ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 26.

⁶² Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 16.

⁶³ See Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 25-26.

the future to rule over the whole creation, and, in this way, the future takes charge of our existence. If Pannenberg's assertions are right, the influence of our current situation and our past, though still powerful and even painful, gets weakened, because we may be able to anticipate the future that God creates for us, imagining our existence from the future in which God exercises his lordship over all creation. This eschatological vision helps us to get over the conventional way of thinking that asserts that our existence is an outcome of the past. Furthermore, it provides us freedom and possibility to anticipate the future with openness. In addition, imagining the reign of the kingdom of God, which will be done not by brutal power but by "creative love," allows us to have hope for the future and overcome difficulties and struggles in our past and present.

In a similar vein, Moltmann also understands future as the mode of God's existence. God's actions in the past and the present are understood in the perspective of God's coming. In this sense, as Moltmann states, "God now already sets present and past in the light of his eschatological arrival, an arrival which means the establishment of his eternal kingdom, and his indwelling in the creation renewed for that indwelling."⁶⁴ Like Pannenberg, Moltmann's idea of the "coming" God ("the power of a new future"), gives us a new understanding of God, which challenges our perception of time and eternity in a profound way. God is already present in the way his future, in promise and hope, empowers the present.

Of course, as a pastoral theologian, I am aware that we cannot deny the reality of past events in our lives because it is not easy, sometimes impossible, to alter the unbearable past. Similarly, it requires tremendous courage and resiliency to live with impediments, such as chronic and untreatable depression. Yet I also believe that

⁶⁴ Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 23.

Pannenberg's provocative claim—his understanding of God as the power of the future and the ontological priority of the future—and Moltmann's idea of the coming God, give us the opportunity to reconsider our lives in a fresh and creative way. Chris, one of research participants, talks about how the future impacts the way he understands present and past. According to him, the present moment is heavily influenced by the degree to which he projects himself into the future. As a graduate student, he envisions the future in which he achieves his goal (e.g. to receive a doctoral degree). He states that his belief in a realizable future helps him to endure current challenges and provides him the opportunity to reframe the past meaningfully. Furthermore, as a Christian believer, Chris believes in God's "unfailing love" that will guide him in every circumstance, even when he is "weak, imperfect, and fragile."

The future perspective provides several contributions to the construction of a practical theology of hope. First, recognizing the importance of the future in our lives opens our eyes wide to see the future as a reality and resource. Though the future is not yet come, our thinking, imagination, and anticipation of the future can change our attitude toward life, the way we understand the present, and our perception of the past. Secondly, the future perspective provides a framework to understand our human existence in a different way. The conventional way of thinking tells us that antecedent events decide future acts. However, the futuristic view claims that the future has greater power than the past, emphasizing the openness of being in the new. Even though it is true that our past influences our present, as seen in developmental theory, the future perspective, which sees the present from the future, also influences our present in a tremendous way.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ As an example, think about the case of Martin Luther King Jr. From my perspective, he was a man of the future, who knew the power of the future perspective. When he delivered his legendary speech,

Practice based on the future perspective is performed with the assumption that people are not only influenced by the past, but also are open to the future. Third, the future perspective brings us a new understanding of God. God is understood as a future reality that is powerful in every present, and this God leads history into a new future. The futurity of God shows us that the future is the power of contradiction to the present and releases forces to get over current problems. Humans are invited to participate in God's work through actively involving themselves in the transformation of the world. The transformation of the world is possible by divine love, the power of its future over the present by which the world is transformed in the direction of the glory of God.

Caregiving ministry is part of divine love, performed by God's people, through which the glory of God is expressed. Lastly, in relation to the third point, the future perspective provides a new hope that empowers people who are suffering to resist evils, challenge social systems, and change the world. Hope rooted in the future is not satisfied by the status quo, but envisions a new future that is coming. Thus, pastoral practice that endorses the future vision embraces a prophetic dimension of pastoral ministry that is concerned with social issues (oppression, injustice, and racism, etc.), public advocacy (government-related activities, etc.), and other wide-ranging matters that are beyond individual interests.

In this chapter, I have endeavored to construct a Christian practical theology of hope contextualized through the voices of the research participants, utilizing insights coming from the social sciences and wisdom earned by Christian theology. It has been argued that Christian hope contributes to the spirit of resilience in our lives, is promoted

"I have a dream," not everybody would understand the future he envisioned in his mind. But, King had specific images of a future that he believed would come true. His future perspective challenged the people who listened to his speech, and provided a strong motivation to transform the present.

by our capacity to imagine, is empowered by our relationship with others, and is strengthened by the future perspective. I now turn in the following and final chapter to suggestions for care and counseling based on the practical theology of Christian hope articulated in this chapter.

Chapter 6

Care for the Soul: Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling

Hope is rooted in the past because we remember the mighty acts of God and our personal encounters with the transcendent. Hope is empowered from the future from which it receives its vision. Finally, hope is active in the present as it energizes and motivates us to live so that God's 'will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

—Andrew D. Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*

God is the original and eternally Hopeful Self, who uses the autonomy that is God's own to hold both past and future open for new possibilities. That we exist at all, and that we may contemplate a future for ourselves, is due ultimately to the fact that it is God's very nature to be hopeful.

—Donald Capps, *Agents of Hope*

In the previous chapter, I endeavored to construct a practical theology of hope contextualized in the experience of Korean American Christian immigrants through critical examination of psychological theories, theology, and other related disciplines. The primary concern of this chapter is to suggest, based on the explorations of the previous chapters, practices of care and counseling that might enhance effectiveness of the ministry of care. Designing and developing revised suggestions for praxis lies at the heart of the mission of practical and pastoral theology. How can the idea of hope be employed in our practice of care and counseling? What would happen in our ministry if we utilized the hopeful perspective developed in the previous chapters? This chapter suggests a hope-oriented approach to care and counseling that could benefit not only careseekers but also caregivers. This approach is designed primarily for Korean Americans Christians, but may be applicable to other people, especially people who suffer from marginality, discrimination, or injustice, and who have religious beliefs centered on the awareness of the divine.

I write this chapter as a Christian pastoral theologian and caregiver who is faithful to the Reformed tradition. Basically, I imagine that Christian caregivers provide pastoral care for Christian believers and communities who are suffering and are willing to get counsel. However, my assumption also includes that Christians live under the authority of Scripture and God, and that Scripture tells us to listen to human experience, even if it is outside of our belief system and principles of life, for instance, Jews, atheists, and persons having an affair.¹ Whatever their situation is, Christian caregivers endeavor to listen to the suffering and pain that the careseeker brings and employ their therapeutic skills to relieve the pain and provide spiritually-integrative care to even persons who hold theological and/or religious commitments different from their own.

Phenomenology is my way as a Christian of saying that I am going to listen to all kinds of experiences with an open heart. Theologically, listening to human experiences is like being the hands and feet of God by coming alongside people in need. Phenomenology is about my being present to come alongside anyone's experience, thereby demonstrating the love of God. In other words, phenomenology is a way of listening to any human experience of suffering and hope. If God can become incarnated in Christ in the midst of suffering and evil, which is appropriate for He who is love, why should the follower of God in Christ not come alongside people who are suffering, and embody the presence of the salvific love? Furthermore, if Scripture tells us that humans are created in the image of the divine, why should pastoral caregivers not work with

¹ A biblical story of a woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-11) is an example of how a Christian caregiver should deal with human experience. Rather than judging and condemning, Jesus was merciful and showed empathy. After shaming those who were looking to Jesus to approve their throwing of stones, Jesus comforted the woman and sent her away with courage to fix her life. This story reveals a Christian way of valuing the worth of persons and the importance of love and life-affirming relationships as the will of God. For a good introduction of a Christian way of doing counseling, see H. Newton Malony and David W. Augsburger, *Christian Counseling: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007).

people who have different cultural, psychosocial, and religious backgrounds? In this sense, as pastoral theologian Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger claims, “To do the work of pastoral counseling is one way among others that the church has for seeking to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves.”²

The argument in this chapter is developed in four parts: in the first section, we discuss what Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling means and its distinctiveness as a therapeutic approach to caregiving ministry. The second section examines related therapeutic models that might enrich the development of HOCC. I move in the third section to articulate the main characteristics and theoretical bases of Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling. Finally, in the fourth section, we suggest some methods for Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling.

What is Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling?

Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling (HOCC) is a therapeutic approach that endeavors to respond to human suffering and predicament in a creative way centered on the value of hope. It employs the power and potential of a future perspective, without ignoring the role of past experience and the importance of the very moment of the present. Through HOCC, sufferers are encouraged to participate in their past, present, and future, in a holistic way, exploring new possibilities, cultivating creative imagination, developing healthy relationships, and seeking holistic spirituality. A hope-oriented approach to care and counseling is based theologically on a loving and trustworthy God who calls us into an open-ended future and promises deliverance, liberation, and

² Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, “An Interdisciplinary Map for Christian Counselors: Theology & Psychology in Pastoral Counseling,” in *Care for the Soul: Exploring the Intersection of Psychology & Theology*, ed. Mark R. McMinn and Timothy R. Phillips (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 240.

salvation. HOCC attempts to help people to become holistic and creative human beings. It helps people to reframe their stories, encouraging them to connect their stories to the divine perspective. This method further makes an effort to provide a realistic and living hope within a person's life.

HOCC is a phenomenologically-informed method of care. As such, HOCC embraces shared human experiences that are manifested differently, but that represent the similarities among a marginalized population. Thus, though HOCC is based on lived experiences of Korean American Christian immigrants, it is not just for these people. The uniqueness of this method is its mindfulness of the lived experience of immigrants, refugees, and other marginalized people, and its use of their experiences as primary components for developing therapeutic intervention skills and strategies. HOCC attempts to promote hope in the lives of these people through various resources that will be discussed later. HOCC is also mindful of the context where the caregiving ministry is offered, such as individual care, community care, and the "prophetic" ministry of care (e.g., social justice, public advocacy, etc.). HOCC is designed to benefit pastoral caregivers and/or religious leaders who want to help people who are suffering from various issues, especially in the face of injustice, oppression, and other social-cultural predicaments.

HOCC and Related Therapeutic Models

Many theorists and clinicians have endeavored to integrate the idea of hope into the practice of care and counseling.³ HOCC is built and expands upon these therapeutic

³ See, for instance, Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*; Capps, *Agents of Hope*; Clinebell, *Growth Counseling*; Stone, *Depression and Hope*; Stone and Lester, "Hope and Possibility"; Stotland, *The Psychology of Hope*; Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*; Snyder, ed., *Handbook of Hope*; Bidwell and Batisky, "Abundance in Finitude."

models. As a contextualized approach, however, HOCC attempts to engage these models with a critical perspective based on the lived experience of marginalized people, such as Korean Americans. I find three therapeutic approaches extremely helpful for the development of HOCC: (1) Capps' reframing method, (2) Clinebell's growth therapy, and (3) Snyder's hope theory. The reframing method suggested by Donald Capps is valuable in that it provides a fresh perspective to understand human phenomena, helping us to create conditions of hope. Two particular methods of reframing—future visions and revising the past—can be used for promoting and facilitating hopefulness. Growth counseling, developed by Howard Clinebell, helps us to create and sustain hopefulness. Through encouraging us to see potentialities rather than failures and weaknesses in our lives, growth counseling facilitates a person becoming a holistic being through greater vitality, spontaneity, and inner joy. Hope theory, a research-based therapeutic model, provides an efficient tool to help people to achieve their goals through enhancing their motivation and facilitating their search for effective pathways. These methods have some limitations and weaknesses, but in the following pages, my focus is mainly on how these therapeutic models can enrich HOCC.

The Method of Change and Reframing

In *Reframing: A New Method in Pastoral Care*, Capps argues that the reframing method is not only therapeutically effective. It is also biblically and theologically based, having much affinity and compatibility with certain biblical forms, ideas, and experiences.⁴ According to Capps, “reframing essentially involves placing a problem or

⁴ See Donald Capps, *Reframing: A New Method in Pastoral Care* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

difficulty within a new perceptual framework and thereby changing its meaning.”⁵ While all the reframing methods discussed by Capps seem to be potentially beneficial for creating conditions for hope, two particular methods stand out as ways of nurturing hope.⁶ These two methods are the method of envisioning the future and the method of revising the past. As Capps points out, these methods are particularly valuable for creating and facilitating hope because of their involvement in the reframing of time.⁷ When the framework of time changes, the meaning of certain events can change, sometimes altogether. While the former method is designed to help people to take a future perspective on the present, overcoming the captivity of the present, the latter method encourages them to revise the past to experience it in a new frame, helping them to alter its meaning, and thus “changing the past from a basis for hopelessness into a basis and resource for hopefulness.”⁸

Envisioning the Future

The method of envisioning the future is based on the assumption that people can have a different future from the one that present challenges and difficulties would predict, and that people can take personal responsibility for producing this alternative outcome. In this way, the method provokes hope, and grounds this hope in their capacity to take the future into their own hands and shape it according to their desires. To demonstrate the effectiveness of this method, Capps illustrates the therapeutic techniques that two Finnish

⁵ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 164.

⁶ For a more detailed discussion on various helpful techniques of reframing, see Capps, *Reframing*, 27-51.

⁷ See Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 163-76.

⁸ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 165.

psychotherapists, Ben Furman and Tapani Ahola, utilize.⁹ According to Capps, Furman and Ahola encourage their clients to “fantasize” their situation from a future perspective. For instance, a husband who had a habit of binge drinking, which troubled not only his marital relationship but also his professional career, was suggested to “fantasize” or imagine that his problem had been resolved two years ago. The “positive visions of the future” motivated him to see his situation in a different way. With the help of his wife, he was able to set goals for change and recognize the resources that were available to him. Through applying this therapeutic technique, the couple developed a hopeful attitude, enacting the personal autonomy which was necessary to make a different future.¹⁰ In a theological sense, as Capps asserts, the method of envisioning the future is a kind of “realized eschatology. The future is already here, in the present, so that what we have been hoping for—our heartfelt desires—is already being met.”¹¹ Thus, the role of the caregiver is to facilitate the careseeker to experience her future in the present.

Revising the Past

Another important reframing method that can be utilized for Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling is the method of revising the past. This method encourages people to “revise” or reinterpret their past stories. Our commonsense says that the past is a fixed and unchangeable reality. However, though we cannot change our past, we still have the ability to interpret our past in a different perspective. This method helps people to see their past not as the source of their problems, but as “a resource, a store of memories,

⁹ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 166-70. See Ben Furman and Tapani Ahola, *Solution Talk: Hosting Therapeutic Conversations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 91-106.

¹⁰ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 166-68.

¹¹ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 169.

good and bad, and a source of wisdom emanating from life experience.”¹² It is a type of reframing because a new frame of meaning is provided in our past. As Capps rightly notes, however, this method does not intend to excuse abuse, violence, or neglect that people have inflicted or received in their lives. The point is that the caregiver tries to open a new possibility of understanding a person’s life stories. Capps references a clinical case included in Furman and Ahola’s book. Flora, who was suffering from depression and constant weeping, was referred to therapy. Though she was struggling with various problems in her family, she was a successful career woman who was admired for her talent and creativity at working with children. In therapy, Flora spoke of her unhappy childhood because of her mother’s heavy drinking. Flora remembered one kind of experience as particularly painful. When Flora’s mother was drunk, she used to shut Flora in a dark cupboard for long periods of time. When the therapist asked what she did in that dark cupboard, Flora explained that she used to make up all kinds of imaginary creatures to play with. The therapist spent time conveying to Flora the therapist’s acknowledgment of and empathy for the suffering she had experienced in that cupboard. In time, the therapist also invited Flora to consider that in the cupboard, she had developed a strong capacity for creativity and talent of being imaginative. Eventually, as she came to see the experience from this new point of view, Flora was able to reframe her awful experience as also an experience she had used constructively, to learn and develop. Even her abusive mother had not been able to stop Flora from using her imagination.

The biblical story of Joseph also shows the importance of revising our past. Rather than blaming his brothers who had discarded him pitilessly, Joseph reframes his

¹² Furman and Ahola, *Solution Talk*, 18.

past stories, which would be otherwise very traumatic, into God's plan to save His people.¹³ It was possible because Joseph had a hopeful self which was "grounded in the boundless mercy of God, who is able to take sinful actions that we or others committed in the past and make of them something better than we would ever have imagined."¹⁴ In this sense, I agree with Capps' assertion that "God is the original and eternally Hopeful Self, who uses the autonomy that is God's own to hold both past and future open for ever new possibilities."¹⁵ Thus, theologically, caregivers' work of helping persons in their care to revise their past is based on the belief that God is hopeful in nature.

A strength of this reframing method is that it helps people to change, modify, or reinterpret their life stories, giving them an opportunity to imagine different futures or revise their past events. It is also a clinically-effective and theologically-informed method. But it is doubtful that this method can be applicable to all situations. For instance, how can extremely painful memories become resources and provide new meanings for the person who had suffered them? There seem high probabilities for the caregiver to gloss over the careseeker's experience of pain, loss, and other predicaments in order to focus on the future or to generate an alternative view of the past. Thus, though Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling utilizes the method of reframing as a means of care, I will give some attention to the reality of evils in the world more carefully and attempt to reduce, if not totally eradicate, the possible danger of this method.

¹³ See Genesis 50:20.

¹⁴ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 175.

¹⁵ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 175.

Growth Counseling

Along with the method of reframing, Clinebell's growth counseling provides a unique way to create and sustain hope through the ministry of care. Clinebell's growth counseling is an effective hope-oriented approach to counseling because it focuses on an individual's positive potentials rather than their failures and weaknesses.¹⁶ Clinebell believes that the "growth-hope perspective" helps people enhance their growth and wholeness by encouraging them to see themselves through the "growth-hope-empowerment-spirituality perspective."¹⁷ Clinebell's approach to counseling is, as he says, not the "pathological-medical model," but a "growth-learning model."¹⁸

According to Clinebell, growth-oriented caregivers see people in terms of their past *successes*, present *strengths*, and future *possibilities*, though without ignoring their past failures and present weaknesses or pathology. Clinebell argues that "seeing people in terms of what they are and what they can become may help them accept themselves and move toward what they have potential of becoming."¹⁹ Thus, viewing people from this "growth perspective" helps people develop better relationships—friendships, or a marital relationship, or a teaching relationship—and thereby enhance our chance to cultivate hopefulness. For Clinebell, "growth" means "any change in a direction of greater wholeness and the fulfillment of one's potentialities," and/or "the life-long

¹⁶ Clinebell, *Growth Counseling*. Clinebell called his approach "growth counseling," and in his later work, he used a different, but interchangeable, name "wholeness counseling." See Howard J. Clinebell Jr., *Counseling for Spiritually Empowered Wholeness: A Hope-Centered Approach*, new ed. (New York: Haworth Press, 1995).

¹⁷ Clinebell, *Growth Counseling*, 9. Clinebell, *Counseling for Spiritually Empowered Wholeness*, xi.

¹⁸ Clinebell, *Growth Counseling*, 11.

¹⁹ David M. Moss, "Growth Counseling: A Dialogue with Howard Clinebell," *Journal of Religion and Health* 23, no. 3 (Fall 1984): 175.

process of developing the unique gifts of each stage.”²⁰ Refusing to see people with “pathological glasses” that see only their problems, weaknesses, failures, conflicts, and pathology, growth counseling attempts to understand people as “having a wealth of unused possibilities for living more creatively, living in ways that are more socially significant, thereby increasing their vitality, spontaneity, and inner joy.”²¹

According to Clinebell, there are *seven* interdependent dimensions for human growth: human *minds* and human *bodies*, human relationships with *other people*, *work and play*, the *biosphere*, the *groups and institutions* that sustain humans, and the *spiritual dimensions* of our lives.²² It is worthwhile to note that Clinebell stresses spiritual growth as the “heart of all growth” because he believes that it is the area of being “distinctively human,” though he recognizes the interdependency of all dimensions of human beings. Thus, spiritual growth, such as the enrichment of our realistic hope, our values, our meanings, our inner freedom, our faith systems, and our relationship with God, becomes the central aim of growth counseling. More specifically, Clinebell illustrates seven interrelated spiritual needs, which include the need for (1) a viable philosophy of life; (2) creative values; (3) a relationship with a loving God; (4) developing our higher self; (5) a sense of trustful belonging in the universe; (6) renewing moments of transcendence; (7) a caring community that nurtures spiritual growth.²³ Clinebell maintains that church needs

²⁰ Clinebell, *Growth Counseling*, 13; Clinebell, *Counseling for Spiritually Empowered Wholeness*, xiv.

²¹ See Moss, “Growth Counseling,” 176. For the summary of the differences between traditional psychoanalytically and insight-oriented therapies (which usually use the pathology model) and growth-oriented psychotherapy, see Clinebell, *Counseling for Spiritually Empowered Wholeness*, 151-54.

²² In his 1995 version, Clinebell adds “work and play” with other six dimensions.

²³ Clinebell, *Counseling for Spiritually Empowered Wholeness*, 18-19, 82-83.

to be a growth-enabling community of caring. Clinebell's differentiation of health-producing religion from sickness-producing religion is remarkably refreshing in our time.

Salugenic (health-and growth-producing) *religion* results when people satisfy their spiritual needs in open, life-affirming, reality-respecting ways. *Pathogenic* (sickness-producing, growth-blocking) *religion* results when people attempt (unsuccessfully) to satisfy their needs in idolatrous, rigid, authoritarian, life-constricting, and reality-denying ways.²⁴

Further, salugenic religion enriches all other dimensions of life, while pathogenic religion diminishes all these dimensions.²⁵

In relation to our exploration of hopefulness, it is significant that Clinebell uses hope as an important guiding theme of his counseling method. Clinebell understands his growth counseling as a "Hope-Centered Method" or a "Hope-Centered Approach." Criticizing pathology-oriented therapies that were the major therapeutic modalities of the time, Clinebell boldly argues that hope-centered growth approaches need to be an alternative method for effective counseling, since he believes that the concept "hope" provides an indispensable resource working with people seeking care. He writes,

Hope is a powerful but often neglected dynamic for change in us human beings. Hope allows us to risk greater vulnerability. It enables us to continue struggling when growth is blocked or is very slow. . . . When people come for help with major life crisis they often feel in or near despair. The growth counselor seeks to fan their flickering spark of hope and thus help them activate the energies needed for making constructive changes. The counselor-therapist is essentially a hope-awakener.²⁶

²⁴ For more detailed discussion of salugenic and pathogenic religion, see Howard J. Clinebell Jr., *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth*, rev. and enl. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), chapter 5.

²⁵ Clinebell, *Counseling for Spiritually Empowered Wholeness*, 19.

²⁶ Clinebell, *Counseling for Spiritually Empowered Wholeness*, 30.

The caregiver does not ignore or minimize the careseeker's suffering, attending to their painful life stories. At the same time, the caregiver also attempts to help the careseeker to assess their potentialities and realize their possibility of growth. In this way, growth counseling maintains the balance between these two seemingly contradictory sides.

According to Clinebell, hope relies on various elements and factors, such as our expectation about the future and the meanings that it holds for us, the sense and the reality of having some power to influence our environment to move toward our goals, and the attitudes of significant persons toward us and our future. Clinebell maintains that hope in a meaningful future is a vital motivation for growth. "To be sustained," says Clinebell, however, "hope must be grounded in what the individual perceives as ultimately real."²⁷ To keep hope alive, for Clinebell, it is helpful for a person to believe that life has a larger spiritual meaning. All genuine hope is ontologically based, in that "it requires facing nothingness through the transforming power of living faith."²⁸

To promote hope in growth counseling, Clinebell suggests that caregivers need to help people believe that they have the power to change. Progress toward this can usually be accomplished by actively affirming their growth potentialities, coaching them to picture themselves mentally as growing toward their goals, encouraging them to change their situation, and to relate to them with both caring and with confrontation. As Clinebell says, actualized hopes cultivate more realistic and stronger expectations of the future and these feelings of hope and self-worth can offer the energy for further growth.²⁹

²⁷ Clinebell, *Counseling for Spiritually Empowered Wholeness*, 90.

²⁸ Clinebell, *Counseling for Spiritually Empowered Wholeness*, 91. Clinebell indicates that this insight originally comes from feminist philosopher Mary Daly.

²⁹ Clinebell, *Counseling for Spiritually Empowered Wholeness*, 31.

In what ways does Clinebell provide pastoral counseling using the framework of hope? What does he do in his counseling sessions? In an interview with David Moss, Clinebell describes the process of doing counseling:

I start in the usual way by establishing rapport and listening to the pain; then I let the person know that her or his crisis is an opportunity to grow and that I want to help that person use it that way. I begin to help the person sort out the parts of the problem and decide on constructive action to cope with some of the pieces, and thus begin to make a plus out of the minus. As the person tries to implement the action plan, all sorts of resistances in her or his feelings and attitudes have to be worked through. I keep looking at the person through the growth perspective and using the growth formula—that is, I keep *affirming* the person as much as I honestly can and keep *confronting* the person, gently but firmly, to keep using more of his or her resources. When value and meaning issues emerge, as they inevitably do, I help the person do spiritual growth work. As the person begins to change and grow, I affirm this movement and help him or her plan the next growth steps. Setting growth goals that are realistic and achievable is important throughout the process. . . . I encourage the person to begin to reach out to share whatever growth has been made with others. At high points along the way, we may have brief informal celebrations of the gift of growth that the person is aware of receiving. When persons “graduate” from counseling or therapy, I try to refer them to ongoing growth groups to provide a caring community to sustain their continuing growth and prevent what, in traditional religious language, was called “backsliding.”³⁰

From Clinebell’s counseling process, we can clearly see how Clinebell emphasizes a growth perspective, encourages people to do spiritual growth work, and endeavors to help them change with achievable action plans. In *Growth Counseling*, Clinebell summarizes the methods and dynamics through which he does therapeutic work. His methods include: seeing and relating to careseekers through the growth-hope perspective; using their crisis as an opportunity to encourage growth; expressing care though genuine affirmation; balancing and integrating caring affirmation with caring confrontation; using intentionality as a key concept in counseling; awakening and nurturing realistic hope for creative change; helping people live more fully and zestfully

³⁰ Moss, “Growth Counseling,” 192.

in the present and move by choice toward better future; working in both the area of feelings and behaviors; using a developmental perspective; being aware of social problems as a context of individual and relational problems; dealing explicitly with value and spiritual issues; and drawing on the resources of a wider community of nurture and support.³¹ Thus, as explained above, Clinebell's growth counseling resonates with the spirit of Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling.

Clinebell's growth counseling is hope-based and utilizes a plethora of clinical methods that were available at the time in order to enhance wholeness in one's life.³² Growth therapy is also a holistic therapeutic model that embraces the whole range of human growth, including body, spirit, and ecosystem. Clinebell's approach seems to be theoretically sound and clinically effective in his time. One weakness is that, viewed from the vantage point of the 21st century, Clinebell's view does not reflect sufficient social analysis and cultural awareness. However, I appreciate his de-emphasis of psychopathology vis-à-vis his renewed emphasis on human growth and wholeness. Clinebell's growth perspective is also biblically and theologically based, in that he borrows the motifs of growth from the Bible, such as the image of God, liberation, hope as a persistent motif throughout the Bible, Jesus' life and relationships, and the kingdom of God. Furthermore, Clinebell's approach is well-balanced in that he sees the tension between personal pathology, evil, and human and social destructiveness, and human potentialities for change and growth. Clinebell rightly recognizes the existence of evil in

³¹ Clinebell, *Growth Counseling*, 96-100. For Clinebell's developmental view on counseling, see Clinebell, *Growth Counseling*, chapter 6.

³² For a detailed discussion of clinical methods growth counseling employs, see Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling*; Howard J. Clinebell, *Contemporary Growth Therapies: Resources for Actualizing Human Wholeness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981).

human existence without losing the awareness of creativity and growth potentials. Thus, I will use Clinebell's growth perspective as an important resource to enhance the effectiveness of my therapeutic suggestions.

Hope Theory

Hope theory, a relatively new theory of hopeful thinking, was developed by psychologist C. R. Snyder and his associates at the University of Kansas. Hope theory emphasizes goal-directed thinking in which a person utilizes both "pathways thoughts" (the perceived capacity to generate routes to desired goals) and "agency thoughts" (the motivational force to lead people to goals).³³ Snyder understands hope not as a passive, emotional phenomenon that occurs only in the darkest moments, but as a process through which individuals actively pursue their goals. Thus, hope is conceptualized as a goal-directed cognitive process. According to hope theory, emotions are considered a by-product of goal-directed thought. In other words, hope theorists believe that positive emotions reflect perceived success in the pursuit of goals, while negative emotions reflect perceived failures. In this sense, hope theory is different from the view that sees hope as an emotion.³⁴ Hope theory is fundamentally cognitive in nature.

Since hope theory emphasizes goal-directed thinking, goals become its "anchors." Hopeful goals may include objects, achievements, or outcomes that individuals imagine and anticipate in their minds, but they should meet certain qualifications. These goals would have to be important enough to work for. Small goals can be sub-goals for the

³³ C. R. Snyder, "Hypothesis: There Is Hope," in *Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, & Applications*, ed. C.R. Snyder (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000), 8-13.

³⁴ To see hope as a cognitive process is a recently developed idea. Traditionally, hope was understood primarily as an emotion. For instance, Farran, Herth, and Popovich (1995), and Averill, Catlin, and Chon (1990) view hope as an emotional construct. See Farran, Herth, and Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness* and Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*.

bigger or more important goals that may trigger hope. At the same time, these goals usually involve some uncertainty. Both a zero percent probability of attainment (e.g., at the entrance to Dante's hell, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.") and a 100 percent chance of being fulfilled (e.g., in heaven) do not necessitate hope. Hope theorists agree that hope thrives under conditions of an intermediate chance of goal achievement.³⁵ This provides an important insight to understand the seemingly divergent views conveyed by two of the research participants. As described in chapter two, Harry mentioned that hope was generated in a somewhat "promising" circumstance, while Chris saw that hope was developed even in despair in which he sought "God more eagerly" with the belief in God's unfailing love and mercy. These two interviewees show that objects of hope are located in the continuum between moderate certainty and absolute certainty.

For hope theorists, pathways thoughts, or "waypower," are the "mental plans or road maps that guide hopeful thought."³⁶ Pathways thinking reflects an individual's perceived ability to produce plausible routes to goals. Pathways thoughts tap the perceived capacity to find one or more different ways to reach a desired goal. Although the person typically focuses on one route, if it is blocked, alternative routes must be envisioned to sustain hopeful thinking. Hope theorists claim that high-hope people perceive themselves as being able to generate alternative paths when the original path is blocked; furthermore, high- as compared to low-hope persons actually produce more

³⁵ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 5-6. Snyder, "Hypothesis: There Is Hope," 9. See also Averill, Catlin, and Chon, *Rules of Hope*, 33, 67.

³⁶ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 8.

paths.³⁷ In this way, pathways thinking facilitates generation of specific strategies necessary for goal attainment. It needs to be noted that, as Snyder suggests, our ability to generate imaginable routes is rooted, in part, in a “previous history of successfully finding one or more avenues to one’s goals,” which is “enhanced by previous successes at coming up with new routes to goals when our original passageways have been blocked.” The problem is that “not everyone perceives they can produce the new pathways, however; these people often find themselves feeling painfully stuck when encountering a goal blockage.”³⁸

Another important concept, according to hope theory, is agency thoughts or “willpower.” If goal thinking represents an individual’s desire to achieve a goal and pathway thinking reflects the effective routes to goal attainment, agency thinking can be viewed as the motivation or energy that propels people along their imagined routes to goals. Snyder characterizes agentic thoughts as not only mental energy focused on goal attainment, but also as a “reservoir of determination and commitment.”³⁹ Agency thinking promotes the sense of potential for action, leading people to initiate and sustain movements directed toward desired goals. Like pathways thoughts, the ability to generate this mental willpower is based, in part, on a “previous history of successfully activating our mind and body in the pursuit of goals.”⁴⁰ Hopeful people are persons who can maintain the mental willfulness necessary to overcome blockages on the way to their

³⁷ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 8-10; Shane J. Lopez et al., “Hope Therapy: Helping Clients Build a House of Hope,” in *Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, & Applications*, ed. C. R. Snyder (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000), 137.

³⁸ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 9.

³⁹ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 6.

⁴⁰ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 7.

goals. On the contrary, people with low agency thoughts may be easily dismayed when their goals are blocked.

Hope theory claims that when individuals have both pathways thoughts and agency thoughts for goals, they produce high hope. In other words, willpower or waypower alone cannot yield high hope. A person who has high willpower (high motivation and energy) but low waypower (“little ways”) may not be able to find effective routes to attain goals. Persons with low willpower and high waypower tend to not generate enough determination to reach desired goals. Thus, a person who has both pathways thinking and agentic thinking, along with important and attainable goals, maintains high hopefulness. According to hope theory, high-hoppers are especially good at dealing with life challenges and are not easily impeded by these difficulties; instead, they have the capacity to formulate alternative routes to their goals and channel their energy to utilize these effective pathways.⁴¹ I see two interviewees, Andy and Harry, as typical “high-hoppers”: they are equipped with both waypower and willpower in their pursuit of desired goals. As immigrants, their primary goal, among others, is to be settled in the U.S. (such as having jobs, establishing economic security, and making a happy family, etc.). While living in the U.S., they have encountered challenges and difficulties that caused them to change their career frequently. In the case of Andy, starting from a gas station clerk, he worked in two electronic companies, drove a taxi, and later became the owner of a liquor store in which he spent twenty years. Though the work environment was often harsh, he was able not only to create possible routes to achieve his goals (e.g., finding available jobs), but he also generated the mental willpower to get over obstacles he had to face (e.g., a positive mind-set, a thankful heart, Christian faith, etc.).

⁴¹ Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope*, 10-12, 29-43.

Harry also had to deal with new environment which challenged him to maintain hopefulness. But, like Andy, he was able to find various routes to reach his goals, having different jobs, such as a computer mechanic, a welding worker, a printing shop business owner and, finally, the owner of a grocery market for twenty years. Through extraordinary diligence, integrity, and strong Christian faith, he could maintain a life filled with the motivation and energy to pursue desired goals. The lives of these two remarkable Korean Americans reveal that hopeful thinking—agency thoughts and pathways thoughts—enables people to overcome challenges and leads to desired goals.

Based on hope theory, Snyder and others have developed a system of intervention strategies that they call “hope therapy.” Though hope theorists claim that hope is a common factor across psychotherapy approaches,⁴² they admit that hope therapy works best by integrating solution-focused, narrative, and cognitive-behavioral therapeutic modalities.⁴³ Hope therapy seeks to help people to find “clearer goals, producing numerous pathways to attainment, summoning the mental energy to maintain the goal pursuit, and reframing insurmountable obstacles as challenges to be overcome.”⁴⁴ Hope therapists assert that the hopeful therapeutic relationship (e.g., a sound, trusting, and

⁴² Snyder and other hope theorists believe that hope is not only an extremely important common component for successful psychological change, but it also is a common factor among various psychotherapeutic models. Their assertions are based on Jerome D. Frank, who demonstrated the fairly equal effectiveness among differing psychotherapies and identified hope as the common basis of successful psychotherapy. See Jerome D. Frank and Julia Frank, *Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). See also C. R. Snyder and Julia D. Taylor, “Hope as a Common Factor across Psychotherapy Approaches: A Lesson from the Dodo’s Verdict,” in *Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, & Applications*, ed. C. R. Snyder (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000), 89-108.

⁴³ See Scott T. Michael, Julia D. Taylor, and Jen Cheavens, “Hope Theory as Applied to Brief Treatments: Problem-Solving and Solution-Focused Therapies,” in *Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, & Applications*, ed. C. R. Snyder (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000), 151-66; Julia D. Taylor et al., “Hope Theory and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies,” in *Handbook of Hope*, 109-22; C. R. Snyder et al., “The Role of Hope in Cognitive-Behavior Therapies,” *Cognitive Therapy and Research* 24, no. 6 (2000): 747-62.

⁴⁴ Lopez et al., “Hope Therapy,” 123.

positive therapeutic alliance) is necessary and important to create cognitive change and increased hope and that the enhancement of clients' self-referential agentic and pathway goal-directed thinking is pivotal for the success of treatment. Hope therapy consists of two main stages, each having two steps. The first stage is *instilling hope*, which is facilitated by "hope finding" and "hope bonding." The second stage is *increasing hope*, in which therapists work for "hope enhancing" and hope reminding."

Hope therapists instill hope through helping clients to find the hope they already possess and have demonstrated previously in their lives. Using formal assessments and narratives conveyed by clients, therapists facilitate clients to develop more positive views about their future. According to Snyder and his colleagues, hope therapy is primarily "present-centered and future-oriented," helping clients "examine what is going on now with an eye toward prospective goals."⁴⁵ It does not mean that hope therapy ignores clients' past experiences; rather hope therapists endeavor to find how prior behaviors and attitudes have influenced clients' current situations, and therapists help them to understand these early experiences from the hope perspective (goals, willpower, and waypower). Therapists facilitate clients to "draw from the lessons of their own past, while projecting themselves into their futures."⁴⁶ Through this process, clients are encouraged to have more specific plans to overcome current obstacles by developing workable pathways and increased agency. Hope bonding, or the formation of a strong therapeutic alliance and hopeful interpersonal relationship, lays the foundation to establish a hopeful therapeutic context in which the client's agency is increased and possible pathways are created. This hopeful relationship often involves collaborative and

⁴⁵ Lopez et al., "Hope Therapy," 128.

⁴⁶ Lopez et al., "Hope Therapy," 131.

mutual work by the therapist and client. A hopeful therapeutic alliance or bond creates a necessary environment for cognitive change and increased hope.

Increasing hope is facilitated by hope enhancing and hope reminding. Hope enhancing is a therapeutic process in which therapists encourage and teach clients to develop clear (“focused and specific”), workable goals, along with helping them to expand and strengthen pathways thoughts and bolster mental energy along the imagined pathways. To enhance hope, hope therapists utilize the full repertoire of techniques and skills, such as narrative, solution-focused, and cognitive-behavioral psychotherapeutic tools.⁴⁷ For instance, therapists help clients learn how to break down pathways into a series of small steps, orient them to a positive framework through discussing past hopeful stories, and give them an opportunity to explore negative thoughts that might trigger current impediments. Hope reminding is the “purposeful search for and recollection of previous successful hope endeavors,” through which clients are encouraged to become their own hope therapists.⁴⁸ It involves the effort of daily uses of hopeful cognition in which the person is able to identify goals thoughts, as well as barrier thoughts, and develop their own ways of enhancing pathways thoughts and agency thoughts.

In sum, hope therapy is based on the assumption that effective psychological functioning depends primarily on increasing the positive, rather than reducing the negative. Hope therapists believe that the reduction of negative symptoms does not guarantee the improvement of mental health and well-being; instead, the improved physical and psychological functioning mainly comes from positive thinking and hope. Thus, hope therapists endeavor to increase the positive, rather than decrease the negative,

⁴⁷ Lopez et al., "Hope Therapy," 137-43.

⁴⁸ Lopez et al., "Hope Therapy," 125, 143-44.

and hope therapy attempts to provide a “simple yet effective framework whereby clients increase their personal strengths and focus on successful functioning.”⁴⁹

The main strengths of hope therapy lie in its specific, concrete, and research-based approach. A relatively new therapeutic model, hope therapy emerges as one of the most effective methods among others. This model provides a measuring tool, the Hope Scale, to assess each individual’s hope (for adults and children), and its originators claim that it works well with other therapeutic models, such as cognitive-behavioral therapies, problem-solving and solution-focused therapies, and feminist therapy. Hope therapy also works well with anxiety and panic attacks, and depression, and its developers consider it applicable to people who are suffering from HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, disability, and large-scale social issues (aging, work environment, government).⁵⁰ However, I wonder whether hope therapy would fit well with non-Westerners, such as Asians. A goal-directed thinking method, which seems to be very popular and effective in Western culture, may not be equally effective for Eastern cultures, in that it reflects a Western preoccupation with mastery, control, and specificity. Thus, HOCC might benefit from hope therapy, though there may be possible limitations.

Theoretical Characteristics of Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling

Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling is a nuanced, contextualized, and phenomenologically-informed approach, which is based on the experience of a marginalized population, such as Korean American immigrants. In this section, I explicate the main characteristics of HOCC. This approach shares with hope theory the notion that hope is an extremely important component for successful psychological

⁴⁹ Lopez et al., "Hope Therapy," 147.

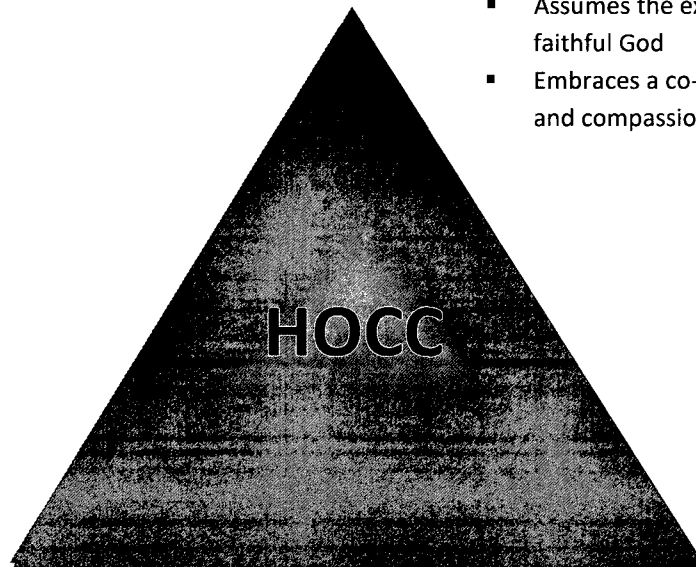
⁵⁰ For hope therapy’s applications to specific people, see Snyder, ed., *Handbook of Hope*, 183-412.

change and functioning. Research has vindicated that hope is a common factor across psychotherapy approaches. As previously noted, Jerome D. Frank and Julia B. Frank claimed that hope is the common basis of successful psychotherapies and saw enhancing hope as the core psychotherapy process.⁵¹ According to Frank and Frank, even Sigmund Freud admitted the importance of hope in therapy when he wrote, “Expectation colored by hope and faith is an effective force with which we have to reckon . . . in all our attempts at treatment and cure.”⁵² Hope is a primary source for life and resilience, helping people overcome struggles in their lives. In the therapeutic context, hope is a viable factor to which both caregivers and careseekers need to attend. I propose a care and counseling approach that is phenomenologically-informed, hope-oriented, and theologically-based. Figure 2 depicts the main characteristics of HOCC.

⁵¹ Frank and Frank, *Persuasion and Healing*.

⁵² Sigmund Freud, “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. J. Strachey, vol. 7 (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953), 289. Cited in Frank and Frank, *Persuasion and Healing*, 146.

A theologically-based approach



- Assumes the existence of a loving and faithful God
- Embraces a co-suffering, ever-present, and compassionate God

A phenomenologically-informed approach

- Is based on the lived experience of a marginalized population
- Is aware of the reality of human suffering & predicaments
- Draws on issues, such as systemized oppression, racism, and affliction

A hope-oriented approach

- Embraces a hopeful perspective
- Endeavors to reframe the past
- Does not ignore satisfactions in the present
- Is oriented to the future

FIGURE 2. Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling.

A Phenomenologically-Informed Approach

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, HOCC is a phenomenologically-oriented approach. This approach is based on the lived experience of a marginalized population—Korean Christian immigrants in the U.S.—and in other applications it would remain oriented to disenfranchised communities, including immigrants, refugees, and other groups suffering from oppression, injustice, and inequality. This means that HOCC is keenly aware of the realities of human suffering and predicaments that qualify our

hopes. HOCC takes human suffering as its main context. Without a careful assessment and a thorough analysis of human finitude, HOCC would fall into an approach that glosses over tragedy, suffering, and pain in human existence. To commend the virtues of hope without considering human impediments would trivialize the enduring pain of loss and the reality of suffering. Thus, HOCC concerns such realities as systemic oppression, racism, marginality, and affliction as necessary areas for the caregiving ministry. This prophetic dimension of care, which overcomes individualistically-oriented care, is really needed in our society. In this sense, HOCC is congruent with multicultural, oppression-sensitive, and antiracist pastoral caregiving.⁵³ Some of the primary components of these methods include:

- Addressing power differences based on diversity characteristics such as ethnicity, race, gender, social class, sexual identity, age, religion, national origin, immigration status, ability/disability, language, place of residence, ideology, and membership in other marginalized groups;
- Seeking to understand how cultural and sociopolitical influences shape individuals' worldviews and related health behaviors;
- Advocating for cultural sensitivity, such as awareness, respect, and appreciation of cultural diversity;
- Attending to a history of individual and collective oppression among marginalized people;
- Promoting therapeutic empowerment through helping marginalized people to increase their access to resources, develop options to exercise choice, improve self-esteem and the esteem of the collective, implement culturally relevant assertiveness, augment agency, affirm cultural strengths, overcome internalized oppression, and engage in transformative actions;

⁵³ See Lillian Comas-Diaz, "Multicultural Theories of Psychotherapy," in *Current Psychotherapies*, ed. Raymond J. Corsini and Danny Wedding, 9th ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 2011), 536-67; Donald M. Chinula, *Building King's Beloved Community: Foundations for Pastoral Care and Counseling with the Oppressed* (Cleveland, Ohio: United Church Press, 1997); Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen Brown Montagno, eds., *Injustice and the Care of Souls: Taking Oppression Seriously in Pastoral Care* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).

- Challenging White privilege and sexism, unacknowledged systems that give unearned power to European Americans and males of all racial-ethnic identities;
- Overcoming hyper-individualistic models of care, through addressing the questions of the social forces that conspire to precipitate problems;
- Treating everyone as a person of dignity and value, not someone to be used or controlled;
- Emphasizing pastoral care that values *shared power*, rather than *power over* people.

For instance, Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling attempts to ask how language barriers, financial difficulties, skin color, and so forth have influenced the lives of marginalized persons and the way in which they perceive hope. HOCC also endeavors to explore how culture shapes a person's life. For example, it can be explored how a person's Eastern collectivistic mindset influences the way she or he understands hopefulness. In a sense, the awareness of cultural differences, systemic oppression, injustice, and so forth becomes a necessary context for HOCC, and this awareness contributes to this approach of care being holistic and contextual.

A Hope-Oriented Approach

Along with the attentiveness to human suffering and pain in its relation to sociocultural environments, HOCC also embraces the importance of a hopeful perspective. HOCC is based on hope. To be sure, models of pastoral care and counseling that take hope seriously are risky because, as Capps rightly states, “there is always the risk that our hopes will *not* be realized.”⁵⁴ When our deepest hopes are not met, we may experience disappointment, feelings of devastation, and even despair. Also, there are strong possibilities that we will pursue unworthy goals, overlooking other, more desirable hopes. Ironically, while “unfulfilled hopes cause despair,” “fulfilled hopes

⁵⁴ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 75. [Emphasis in original.]

often cause depression, apathy, and boredom.”⁵⁵ HOCC endeavors to help people to set up hopes that are desirable and attainable. Some might suspect that a hopeful perspective would trigger us to neglect the satisfactions that we have in the present moment. HOCC does not ignore the importance of the present, because “our current situation is, in part, the fruit of various past hopes that have been fulfilled.”⁵⁶ Thus, HOCC endeavors to help people to appreciate what they already have. HOCC also attends to the impact of the past in our lives, endeavors to work on the past issues we carry into the present, and helps people to revise their past if they are ready to work.

I argue, however, that hope is primarily oriented to the future. To confront various challenges of oppression, liminality, and other types of injustice in our society, marginalized people need a resilient spirit that comes from a hopeful attitude. In the midst of pain, loss, and risks that we are encountering, the empowerment of choosing to live in hope is what is required for well-being.⁵⁷ A hopeful attitude helps people to endure their suffering and empowers them to see the possible and anticipate a better future. In this way, HOCC helps people to live with suffering and seeks to motivate them to find reason for hope in their lives. Furthermore, HOCC challenges people to be involved actively in actions that are required for wholeness, freedom, and growth.

A Theologically-Based Approach

Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling is a theologically-based approach, which is predicated on the belief that hope is a profoundly theological concern and a central issue

⁵⁵ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 75-76.

⁵⁶ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 76.

⁵⁷ Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook, "Love and Power: Antiracist Pastoral Care," in *Injustice and the Care of Souls: Taking Oppression Seriously in Pastoral Care*, ed. Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen Brown Montagno (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 16.

for all pastoral care and counseling. This approach is developed with the assumption that there exists a loving and trustworthy God, who calls us into an open-ended future and promises deliverance, salvation, and liberation. This God is not an apathetic, distant, or dispassionate being; rather it is a co-suffering, ever-present, and compassionate God, who comes to human history, particularly through the life and work of Jesus Christ. Of course, it is not always easy to recognize this God in our lives, in part because of our limited perceptions, experiences, and wisdom, and the inevitable presence of evil. But for those of us who are Christians, this loving and faithful God provides the foundation of hope through which we maintain our lives as meaningful and worthwhile. With this theological perspective, HOCC attempts to help people explore God in their lives, connecting their stories to the divine narrative.

Methods for Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling

HOCC utilizes several therapeutic strategies to promote hope in the lives of people seeking care and counseling, which include: (1) the exploration of new possibilities for the future; (2) the cultivation of creative imagination; (3) the development of healthy relationships; (4) helping to live in tension between suffering and hope with resilient spirit; (5) reframing the past; (6) the promotion of holistic spirituality. HOCC connects past, present, and future in a creative way, and endeavors to develop methods of care that promote not only physical health but also emotional and spiritual well-being for individuals, families, and communities. Figure 3 describes the main therapeutic skills to be utilized in HOCC. As shown below, HOCC is based on a Christian theological perspective.

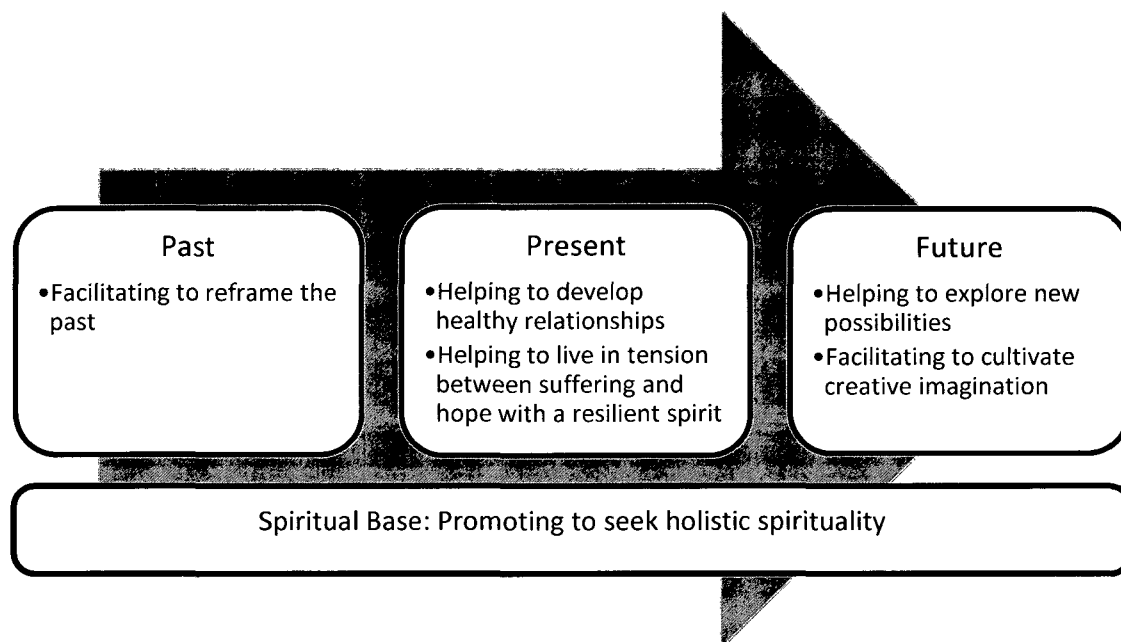


FIGURE 3. Methods for Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling.

Helping to Explore New Possibilities

One of the essential ingredients of HOCC is giving people in need an opportunity to think about the future that has not yet arrived. An emphasis on a future perspective encourages people to reconsider their lives with renewed interest. Individuals, particularly people who are suffering from systemic oppression, injustice, or despair, however, may not be able to envision future possibilities, because they might feel confined to their past traumas and present difficulties. For instance, people who are suffering from depression are often captivated by their past, feel “closed off from the future,” and experience their present as a “kind of standstill or at best an exceedingly slow shuffle.”⁵⁸ Perhaps because of the influence of biochemical and neurological activities and other precipitating factors (intrapsychic, interpersonal, or environmental),

⁵⁸ Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity," 126.

these people often have no energy to engage in a future that might bring new possibilities for living with more vitality.⁵⁹ Still, HOCC is committed to empowering people to explore future possibilities. In this process, hope provides an important framework. As Howard Stone and Andrew Lester state, “*hope is a recognition of possibilities that lie ahead, a trusting anticipation of a time when troubles lessen or end, an investment in a tomorrow that holds promise.*”⁶⁰ This recognition of future possibilities leads people to renewed energy, which enables them to look forward and imagine something ahead.

In a cognitive perspective, future possibilities can be realized through setting up reasonable and attainable goals, along with motivation that drives people to work for those goals and the generation of imagined and possible routes. It is true that desired hopes are not always realizable, and sometimes we crave reaching a goal that is unworthy or selfish.⁶¹ One benefit to keeping a hopeful perspective is, however, that it helps people to reframe their current situation through which they develop a new perception of their present situation and reshape their ideas about the future. Lester suggests that caregivers need to encourage people seeking care to explore “future stories” that might influence their current life, positively or negatively, and to revise or reframe these stories, if needed, in order to construct hopeful future stories.⁶² Theologically, it is possible to experience a future through an eschatological vision in which people anticipate a future in advance.

⁵⁹ See Stone, *Depression and Hope*. Pastoral theologian and counselor Howard Stone has provided helpful insights and practical guidelines for caregivers to deal with depression. Stone comments that depression is triggered by both physiological and psychosocial factors. He links depression with hope because a hopeful perspective helps people who are experiencing depression to “engender a hope that recognizes the past but also takes actions in the present in order to move into [the] future” (62). Using the framework of a brief pastoral counseling method, Stone suggests four therapeutic strategies to work with depression, which include interpersonal, physiological, cognitive, and behavioral interventions.

⁶⁰ Stone and Lester, “Hope and Possibility,” 262. [Emphasis in original.]

⁶¹ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 75-78.

⁶² Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 138-52.

For my interviewee, Helen, this future vision, a form of the hopeful perspective, brings a strong foundation to maintain hopefulness that sustains her current life.

Facilitating the Cultivation of Creative Imagination

Another important aspect of HOCC, which is also related to a future perspective, is to help people to use imagination in a productive and creative way. As explored in previous chapters, imagination is a distinctive human ability and makes it possible to anticipate the future in the present. The Armenian American theologian Flora A. Keshgegian argues, “Without the capacity to imagine, it would be difficult to speak of hope.”⁶³ Hope depends on, in large part, our ability to imagine. Thus, “creative and free imagining” becomes an important component to live in hope.⁶⁴ According to Keshgegian, imagination involves seeing visions and dreaming dreams. These dreams or visions are often related to our deep desires to change and transform our current situation, especially in the midst of oppression, injustice, and discontent in our lives. These dreams also come from our “creativity and our yearning for goodness and beauty and truth,” which leads us to “wholeness.”⁶⁵ Speaking from the Armenian experience of genocide, Keshgegian’s argument about imagination has authenticity for other marginalized populations, showing that imagination provides liberating energy and passion to envision change in their lives and pursue a different and better life. As revealed in some of the research participants’

⁶³ Flora A. Keshgegian, *Time for Hope: Practices for Living in Today's World* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 200.

⁶⁴ It needs to be mentioned, however, that imagination is not always productive. Imagination that is not based on reality might be used as a way of escaping from the current situation. Daydreams or unrealistic fantasy may provide people a short consolation, but do not necessarily help people to deal with their real issues. Thus, imagination needs to be realistic and creative enough to engender a hopeful future. Theologian Moltmann talks about “productive fantasy,” which is expressed through a “poetic imagination which does not wish to change the unbearable past but to anticipate the still unrealized future in order to anticipate and shape it in thoughts and pictures.” See Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, 23.

⁶⁵ Keshgegian, *Time for Hope*, 200-01.

responses, imagination for the future, such as specific goals, a better future, or a better life, gave them the motivation to live with oppression and get over various challenges in their lives.

How, then, can pastoral caregivers and religious leaders assist people to develop their capacity to imagine? Keshgegian suggests several ways to enhance our capacity for imagination, which might be applied for the ministry of care.⁶⁶ One suggestion Keshgegian proposes is to encourage people to take time and space for imagination, not to be occupied and distracted by our routine and hectic life. In a Korean American context, this suggestion may be realized through having prayer time in an early morning church gathering. Many Korean American Christians participate in this activity with their desire to spend “first” time with God in a “holy” place. In a sense, having prayer time in a quiet morning can be a way of practicing imagination in God, in that it is time for anticipating a future with passion, desire, and hope. To see that our dreams, vision, and desires come true, Keshgegian emphasizes the need to “actively” participate in actions to turn possibilities into realities. However, she also warns that our imagination should not be determined by the *success* of such actions, because our hope might quickly disappear. Thus, though we need to devote ourselves fully to work for our imaginations, dreams, and vision, it is not helpful to depend too much on their realization.⁶⁷ In a clinical perspective, one way to utilize our imagination is to use the method of guided imagery, a therapeutic technique that helps people imagine a mental picture of something that is not actually present. Using this method, caregivers can help people to envision their future through imagination. This method facilitates people to experience the future

⁶⁶ Keshgegian, *Time for Hope*, 202-04.

⁶⁷ Keshgegian, *Time for Hope*, 203-04.

by projecting mental pictures or images in their mind's eye. It has been reported that this method greatly enhances the functioning of individuals who suffer from fears, anxieties, sadness, despondency, and even psychosomatic disorders.⁶⁸

Helping to Develop Healthy Relationships

Hope is nurtured through our relationships with others. We need the support of others to cultivate a hopeful attitude because hope is ultimately a shared experience. As learned from developmental theory, the basis of our hope comes from our experience of a reliable and trustworthy relationship with primary caregivers, such as mother and other significant others (father, guardians, grandparents, and other family members, etc.). Hope is bolstered when we develop other important relationships, such as friends, colleagues, partners, spouses, and other interpersonal relationships. Healthy relationships provide an environment where we continue to invest ourselves in others with confidence and courage. Lester mentions that, "People who can hope are people who are meaningfully connected with other people."⁶⁹ People often lose their hope when they lose important relationships or they are in abusive and disrupted relationships. Thus, one important role of pastoral caregivers is to help people to reflect on their relationships and, if needed, facilitate the reconstruction of better relationships through care, education, and guidance.

For a marginalized population, a relational network is extremely important. They are often isolated from their local communities because of the lack of financial resources, other economic issues, cultural differences, language issues, and other psychosocial

⁶⁸ See Arnold A. Lazarus, *In the Mind's Eye: The Power of Imagery for Personal Enrichment* (New York: Guilford Press, 1984); Stone and Lester, "Hope and Possibility," 267-68.

⁶⁹ Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 95.

factors. For these groups of people, cultural and/or religious community can provide tremendous resources to maintain cultural identity, indigenous religious practice, and other relational connectivity.⁷⁰ Thus, caregivers and religious leaders need to encourage people to engage in appropriate faith communities where they can find assurance, recognition, and support. From a Christian perspective, church can be a community of hope in which members share their beliefs, doubts, and experiences with mutual love and intimate fellowship, through various activities, such as worship, preaching, care, and education.

Helping to Live in Tension between Suffering and Hope with a Resilient Spirit

Though dominant U.S. society is becoming more tolerant, culturally-sensitive, and inclusive than in previous centuries, it is still a reality that marginalized people live with oppression whether they are aware of it or not, because of the difference of skin color, language, and other racial-cultural factors. In her article, "Pastoral Care in the Context of North American Asian Communities," Asian theologian and Christian educator, Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng argues that racial-cultural minorities such as Asians in North America suffer from oppression not only through "external forces" but also through internalized discrimination. Ng claims that North American Asian individuals and communities have been impacted by "systemic racism" due to unjust treatment in "what is a predominantly white, European, and still fairly patriarchal society."⁷¹ Along with internalized racism, which has devastated the dignity and self-esteem of Asians and Asian North Americans (as well as other racial-ethnic minority persons), Ng also mentions tensions and injustices within Asian North American communities, such as

⁷⁰ See Ng, "Pastoral Care in the Context of North American Asian Communities," 73-88.

⁷¹ Ng, "Pastoral Care in the Context of North American Asian Communities," 73.

conflicts between generations and genders, and conflicts over the role of women in family and church.⁷² She suggests three ways Christian resources can shape the approach of pastoral care for ethno-cultural and immigrant communities: (1) “reading and interpreting Scripture from the experience of victims/ the colonized”; (2) “doing theology from the side of the sinned against”; (3) “integrating Asian religio-cultural practices with Christian practices.”⁷³ Through this approach, marginalized people are strengthened, empowered, and invited to be a people of God. For the care for racial-ethnic minorities, what is needed is not only care for individuals who cope with their crisis situations, but also care that takes the form of advocacy for social changes that will eradicate the unjust conditions that ruin the quality of life of these peoples.

Living with tension between hope and suffering often requires resilience. One way to promote the resilient spirit is to help sufferers recognize and express their pain and suffering. In their book *Rachel's Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope*, pastoral theologian Kathleen Billman and theologian Daniel Migliore suggest the use of the lament prayer in pastoral care in times of trouble and grief. They claim that bringing the particularity of one's suffering to voice facilitates the sufferer to reach healing and hope, in that it is “an act of faith to trust God with the honest rendering of our experience, with all the tumult that might involve, rather than to deny or avoid the truth.”⁷⁴ They also note the importance of community and ritual in which the sufferer finds space and validation of the expression of emotion in the communal context, experiences the grace

⁷² Ng, “Pastoral Care in the Context of North American Asian Communities,” 78-82. Ng notes that within Asian culture, there are issues of hierarchy in terms of age, gender, and economic class, which are influenced by the Confucian ideal.

⁷³ Ng, “Pastoral Care in the Context of North American Asian Communities,” 82-85.

⁷⁴ Billman and Migliore, *Rachel's Cry*, 101.

of God, and therefore enhances the capacity to be hopeful through the experience of mutual relationship.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Billman and Migliore emphasize the caregiver's awareness of the suffering and hope of persons and communities with marginal social power (e.g., realities of violence, hidden patterns of abuse, and deeply ingrained hatreds), and propose a pastoral care for the empowerment of these marginalized people through "promoting solidarity with all who suffer."⁷⁶ Billman and Migliore's analysis and suggestions can be used in HOCC to strengthen the sufferer's capacity to resist injustice and systemic evil through a renewed vitality of resilience.

Facilitating to Reframe the Past

Past memories and experiences impact our lives in a tremendous way. Sometimes our past becomes the source of our problems, but these past experiences can be a resource for the present and even the future. One important factor is how we interpret and reflect on our past. HOCC attempts to help people revise, reshape, and reframe their past stories to enhance the quality of their lives. As discussed in the earlier part of this chapter, however, it should be clear that the method of reframing the past does not intend to excuse or beautify our experience of pain, suffering, and injustice or gloss over these painful life events. Rather, the goal of this method is to provide a framework to find new possibilities in our painful stories. Reframing the past is especially important because a marginalized population often suffers from bitter experiences living in this hostile and oppressive world. Caregivers can help these people to reframe their stories, facilitating the process of finding new meanings and wisdom.

⁷⁵ Billman and Migliore, *Rachel's Cry*, 86-87.

⁷⁶ Billman and Migliore, *Rachel's Cry*, 87-102, 122-24.

Capps finds the religious rationale for this reframing method in the biblical story of Joseph. Though Joseph's story is in some ways very dramatic, a main message of this story is that a painful past experience can be interpreted in a refreshing way that provides new meaning and significance. "[T]he 'sinful' selling of Joseph was reinterpreted by Joseph himself, when he assures his brother retroactively: 'Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good . . . to save much people alive' (Genesis 50:20)."⁷⁷ When Joseph's story was connected to God's providential plan to save his people, this story was reframed and transformed into a story in which traumatic past experience became the seed of a hope-filled event. I do not believe that every story can be understood in this way because of the reality of evil and the possibility of misusing these stories. Nonetheless, if we use this method carefully and with discernment of the readiness of careseekers to make this turn to reframing, revising our past can provide resources, meanings, and even healing. Thus, the method of reframing the past can be a useful tool for pastoral caregivers and religious leaders to utilize in their ministry of care and counseling, which promote hope.

Promoting to Seek Holistic Spirituality

Religious belief impacts an individual's life in a profound way. As seen from the people who were interviewed, Christian faith shapes, informs, and influences their understanding of hope, life, and future. Theology is embedded in their way of life, thinking, and behavior. It is clear that the interviewees' conception of hope is predicated on the presence, power, and availability of God. Knowing God's presence, God's will, and God's guidance have provided them with a strong motivation and energy to maintain

⁷⁷ Mordechai Rotenberg, "The 'Midrash' and Biographical Rehabilitation," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 25 (1986): 44-45. Cited in Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 173.

hopefulness. For many of them, the difficulties of their social environment and situation, though powerful, did not destroy their hope, because their hope was based on God's love and grace to give them "a future and hope" rather than "evil" (Jer. 29:11). Thus, their Christian hope is a hope based on God who promises the newness of the future through his unfailing love and faithfulness.

However, not everybody is aware of this loving, faithful God: for some, God is experienced as a judge, a fearful tyrant, or a merciless father. One of the important roles of pastoral caregivers and religious leaders would include helping people to uncover their image or view of God so that they may have an opportunity to realize how their perception of God has influenced their life, positively and negatively.⁷⁸ Another important area for the promotion of holistic Christian spirituality is deeply related to a faith community. As Clinebell mentioned, when church becomes a growth-enabling community of caring, our hope will be nurtured and may be extended to other parts of the world (for instance, through reaching out to communities to share Christian gospel and the love of God). Thus, caregivers and religious leaders are called to be agents to create this caring, life-affirming, and salugenic community of faith.

Toward a "Hopeful" Ministry of Care

In *Agents of Hope*, Capps has argued that pastors are hopeful by virtue of their professions, while other professionals may be hopeful in terms of their personal attitudes

⁷⁸ Billman and Migliore provide an important analysis of the incomprehensiveness and hiddenness of God, which might influence our perception of God, particularly when we are in the situation of loss and injustice. Through their thorough inquiry into the prayer of lament, they suggest that the traditional understandings of God's characteristics—often emphasizing immutability and impassibility—may be challenged and deepened in order to provide a more balanced and holistic perspective. See Billman and Migliore, *Rachel's Cry*, 111-16.

toward life or their personal religious faith.⁷⁹ I agree with Capps, because pastors are representatives of God who is the ultimate Hope. I also affirm that one of the basic and fundamental roles of the clergy is to be providers of hope, because it belongs to the heart of Christianity to be hopeful in God. Yet I feel that Capps' claim needs to be expanded: all caregivers, including pastoral counselors, are called to be agents of hope. This is because, through therapeutic relationship, hope can be generated and transmitted. The psychologist Pruyser sees a psychiatrist, as a professional healer, to be "by implication a hopeful, hoping, and hope-instilling person who works with hope, believing practically in its efficacy."⁸⁰ I claim that not only psychiatrists but all helping professionals—nurses, social workers, hospice care providers, etc.—as well as laypeople can be agents of hope in different areas, working for the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of their clients or patients.

It is important to note that hope is engendered by our relationships. Hope is a shared experience. Hope can be contagious: "One hopes with, through and sometimes for someone else."⁸¹ Through our attentive listening, honest response, and wise intervention, hopefulness can be generated within the space where genuine encounter takes place. Furthermore, to be providers of hope, it is mandatory for the caregiver to maintain a hopeful attitude toward life. When those of us who are religious recognize that God is hopeful in nature, we are also empowered to be hopeful because we are made in the image of God. The "hopeful" ministry of care and counseling needs to be

⁷⁹ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, 1-7.

⁸⁰ Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," 86.

⁸¹ Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," 95.

encouraged in our relationships—individual, family, social, and spiritual—and we are called to be an “agent of hope” for this world.

Conclusion: Living with Christian Hope

Christian life means living with hope. Christian hope enables us not only to endure difficulties in our lives, but also to live with vitality, imagination, and resilience. Wherever we seek to live with hope, there is always suffering, struggle, tragedy, and disappointment in various forms. We live in the world where suffering and evil are an ever-present reality. More often than not, we should get through these challenges in our lives. Christian hope does not claim that God would abolish evil so that we can pass through safely; rather it stresses that the presence of God gives us the confidence to pass through difficult places without fear of being deserted by God. King David's 23rd Psalm clearly shows this point. "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me" (v. 4 NRSV). Christian hope comes not from strength, intelligence, or favorable circumstances, but from God, who promises newness from the fractured world and knows the best option for us.

In this dissertation, I have endeavored to explore how hope is understood in the experience of Korean American Christian immigrants. I have also provided an interdisciplinary analysis and interpretation of hope, using the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology. Various psychosocial theories, such as developmental psychology, cognitive theory, depth psychology, and nursing research, have been utilized. To understand the meanings of Christian hope, biblical and theological perspectives have been examined, primarily focusing on biblical passages, such as the accounts of oppression and the Exodus, lament in the Psalms, and prophetic hopes, along with Christian hope manifested through the ministry of Jesus Christ and through Pauline theology. Theologies of Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg have also been

employed to provide theological dimensions of hope—eschatology, the futurity of God, and a hope for the future. Based on the lived experience of six research participants, a Christian practical theology of hope was developed, which was informed by psychosocial and theological interpretations of hope. Insights learned from the constructive work on Christian hope led to suggestions for caregiving ministry, which can benefit the care and counseling of a marginalized population.

The main argument of this dissertation includes these assertions: (1) Christian hope contributes to the spirit of resilience in our lives; (2) imagination promotes our way of hoping; (3) hope is developed, empowered and, possibly, hampered by relationships we are making; (4) hope is strengthened by the perspective on the future; (5) Christian hope is based on God’s love and grace, which leads us into a new future. As implications for the ministry of care and counseling, a hope-oriented approach is suggested, which I call “Hope-Oriented Care and Counseling.” As a phenomenologically-informed, hope-oriented, and theologically-based approach, HOCC uses five strategic methods of care: (1) helping to explore new possibilities; (2) facilitating the cultivation of creative imagination; (3) helping to develop healthy relationships; (4) helping to live in tension between suffering and hope with a resilient spirit; (5) facilitating to reframe the past. As the spiritual base, the construction of holistic Christian spirituality is emphasized.

Suggestions for Future Research

Research on hope is not a new area of inquiry in the field of practical theology, pastoral care, and counseling. Many scholars and clinicians have contributed to the understandings of hope in various perspectives, but more works on hope are encouraged

because this is such an important topic not only for theologians and philosophers, but also for clinicians and researchers.

This dissertation gave me a good chance to explore Christian hope in the experience of specific groups of people. Based on this research, I would like to offer a course focused on Christian hope and pastoral care and counseling. For me, the vocation of being a pastoral caregiver and counselor is deeply rooted in our identity as a Christian believer. Christians live with hope and anticipate a future that is forthcoming. Many, if not all, careseekers seek for counsel in order to find new possibilities of hope, though they may not use the term “hope.” Thus, the exploration of hope and care in the context of theological education may be a good way to reflect the nature of pastoral care and counseling and shape the role of a pastoral caregiver as the agent of hope.

A possible direction for further research is to develop a model of care that is oriented to hope. I have suggested that HOCC is a phenomenologically-informed, hope-oriented, and theologically-based approach, and this can be developed into a model that provides a thorough theoretical framework and effective practical implications for the ministry of care. One of the benefits of this work would be a construction of a therapeutic model which addresses the reality of human suffering and predicaments manifested in the lived experience of marginalized people.

Another possible area of research that I did not explicitly explore in this dissertation is the holistic nature of HOCC. I am convinced that HOCC is a holistic approach, but I was not able to fully develop this important aspect of care and counseling. HOCC is a holistic approach in the sense that it endeavors to connect the past, present, and future in a holistic way for the promotion of the careseeker’s wholeness, freedom,

and growth. HOCC seeks the enhancement not only of physical health but also of emotional and spiritual well-being for individuals, families, and communities.

Furthermore, HOCC aims at the promotion of holistic Christian spirituality with its relation to a faith community.

The research also invites a more practical and specific practice of care using HOCC. I believe that HOCC can facilitate the development of effective therapeutic skills to benefit individuals, communities, and other important areas. A useful direction for research includes the development of HOCC in the context of congregations, hospitals, and nursing homes in that the appropriate understanding of hope might benefit the well-being of these groups of people. Another angle of research might involve group work using the theories and practices developed in this dissertation. Further research can also include the development of HOCC specifically for Korean Americans (or any specific ethnic or cultural group). In this dissertation, I have advanced HOCC as an approach that could be used across contexts, not particularly for any specific group. It would be beneficial to develop a model of care for spiritual care and pastoral counseling with Korean Americans (for example).

All future research suggestions come from my desire to provide hopeful caregiving in various areas of our world so that the world is a better place in which to live.

Appendix A

Public Advertisement

I would like to invite you into my doctoral research project. My name is Chang Kyoo Lee, and I am a Ph.D. candidate at Claremont School of Theology. I am doing a doctoral research project in practical theology. I could use your help with my project on **Christian hope** in Korean Americans' experience. In this project, I am specifically researching how hope shapes the life of Korean Americans.

This project has three main purposes: (1) to understand the **meaning of hopefulness** in the Korean American experience; (2) to identify how **a hopeful attitude** influences people who are suffering; (3) to enhance the researcher's understanding of hope for the **better care of Korean Americans**.

The procedure of this project will be **individual interviewing** through in-person communication. The interview should take about **an hour to 90 minutes** to complete. The potential interviewees would be Korean American Christians immigrated to the U.S. at least **five years ago**, currently with the age of 30 or more.

If you are interested in participating, please fill out the form below and submit it to the church office. Approximately 15 interviewees will be randomly selected. You will be individually contacted later to let you know whether or not you are among the 15 randomly selected for interviewing.

Please feel free to ask me any questions!

Rev. Chang Kyoo Lee
ezra621@hotmail.com
(909) 000-0000

Name:	Age:
Gender:	The year of immigration:
Occupation:	Contact information (phone and/or email)

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Interview Protocol

Project: Christian Hope in Korean American Experience

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Chang Kyoo Lee, CST Ph.D. candidate in Practical Theology

Interviewee: Name Initial:

Age:

Gender:

Occupation:

This project intends to explore the meaning of Christian hope for Korean Americans. The purpose of this work is threefold: (1) to understand the meaning of hopefulness in Korean American experience; (2) to obtain thick descriptions of the life world of selected Korean Americans with respect to understanding the interrelatedness of suffering (e.g., marginalization, affliction, liminality, etc.) and hope; (3) to enhance the researcher's understanding of hope to better care for Korean Americans who receive pastoral care and counseling. This project is conducted as part of a qualitative research work for the Ph.D. dissertation in Claremont School of Theology.

Questions:

1. Can you tell me about reasons, context, and circumstances that made you to come to the United States of America?
2. How was your overall experience living in the U.S.? Any differences compared to living in Korea? If any, what is it?
3. Can you describe any experiences where you have felt marginality, racial discrimination, and other inequality due to being a Korean American?
4. What do you think is hope [*himang* or *somang* in Korean]? Any related images or metaphors? Is hope an emotion, cognition, an attitude, will, or personality, etc.?
5. How is your understanding of hope related to your faith/religion/spirituality?
6. What is the meaning of hope as a Korean immigrant in America? How significant is the concept hope related to other values, such as faith, love, joy, and etc.?
7. In what ways does a hopeful attitude toward life inform a person's life? Can you relate it to your own life?
8. Can you describe your experience where you find that hopefulness has strengthened or transformed you? Any episodes or narratives?
9. What are the sources and roots of hopefulness in your life, now and the past?
10. In what circumstances is hopefulness nurtured in your life?

(Thank individual for participation in this interview. Assure the interviewee of confidentiality of responses and potential future interviews.)

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